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Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-047
Friday
10 March 1995

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Peres, 'Arafat Announce 'Breakthrough' at Erez Meeting

Peres Said 'More Optimistic' Than 'Arafat

TA0903141195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1320 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem at the Erez checkpoint]

[FBIS Translated Text] After meeting at the Erez checkpoint earlier today, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat held a news conference. It has just ended, and I will sum it up briefly: A breakthrough has been made, Peres and 'Arafat said. Peres was more optimistic, while 'Arafat said that we must wait and see.

'Arafat pointed to the security needs of the State of Israel. We will continue our activities to show that the Palestinian police are the only sovereign body in the field and that it is in charge. We will allow no violent acts and will take steps against the perpetrators and put them on trial. We are facing an arms-trade phenomena in the West Bank, 'Arafat said, and we will fight it. We agreed to set up a supreme security council, 'Arafat stated.

Minister Peres announced that a joint committee was indeed set up. It will be headed by Major General 'Uzi Dayan and Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya. Another committee, apparently on economic issues, was established. It will be headed by Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] and Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir. It was also agreed that 'Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin will hold a meeting within two to three weeks.

In the meantime, Israel has agreed to take confidence-building steps toward the Palestinians. The four main steps are: implementing the safe passage [between Jericho and Gaza]; resuming negotiations on the release of Palestinian prisoners; improving the passage procedures at the PA-Israeli crossings; and expanding the quota of entry permits to Israel. The parties also agreed that the negotiations on redeployment and empowerment will be concluded by July. The agreement apparently speaks of two stages of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment, and of a transfer of five additional, mainly economic domains to the Palestinians.

'Arafat Calls Meeting 'Fruitful'

JN0903154495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in the Gaza Strip]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting held today between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres near the Erez checkpoint ended a short while ago. The meeting focused on the implementation of the second stage of the Declaration of Principles [DOP] agreement on the redeployment and the legislative elections, in addition to other issues of mutual concern.

At a news conference following the meeting, President Yasir 'Arafat said the meeting was useful and fruitful. The president said the Palestinian police are the only authorized party responsible for security and order in the areas under the jurisdiction of the National Authority. The president said: We have taken important steps to face arms dealers who are disrupting order in the West Bank now. Those dealers have created disorder in the Gaza Strip in the past. The president added that it has been agreed that a higher security committee will be formed. He added: We hope to be able to implement the clauses of the DOP agreement as soon as possible, in June at the latest, in the rest of the West Bank areas.

The president said certain issues have been agreed on while other issues remain under discussion and negotiation, including a meeting between President 'Arafat with Yitzhaq Rabin, which will be held as soon as possible.

For his part, Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said: We will try to reach an agreement between 15 June and the beginning of July. He said: The agreement we have concluded will be implemented gradually in accordance with the agreement we will reach. He said it has been agreed that nine industrial zones will be built, five in the West Bank and four in the Gaza Strip. It has also been agreed to transfer five other powers to the National Authority in the West Bank as part of the transfer of civilian powers and authorities to the National Authority.

Peres added that it has been agreed that a higher security committee will be established and that it will be chaired on the Palestinian side by 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, head of the national security, and General 'Uzi Dayan on the Israeli side. In addition, a higher civilian committee will be formed. This committee will be chaired by Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', minister of trade and industry, on the Palestinian side, and Uri Savir on the Israeli side.

Peres said the competent ministerial committee will meet to discuss the issue of releasing prisoners soon. He added that around 22,000 new work permits will be given to the West Bank and Gaza Strip workers.

Peres News Conference Remarks Reported

TA0903152595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1258 GMT 9 Mar 95

[News conference by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres with foreign and domestic correspondents on his meeting with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez checkpoint—live, in English and Hebrew, with indistinct passages due to occasional commentary by radio correspondents; italicized passages in Hebrew]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Peres] I want to thank the leader of the Palestinian Authority [PA] for his clarifying the policy on security as far as the PA is concerned, and I would like to follow the announcement of the chairman by the following things: The chairman has asked for the acceleration of the negotiations, and he asked that we shall try to conclude the negotiations during the month of June, and we have suggested—I think that was also agreed—that all of us will aim to conclude the negotiations in between 15 of June to 1 July. So, it is the first time that we are setting up a date, and we shall try to do it.

Secondly, we agreed that the implementation of the interim agreement will be done in a gradual way, meaning there will be one redeployment, and another redeployment [passage indistinct] ...with the agreement that will be negotiated from now through the months of June and July. Then, we have agreed to transfer to the PA additional five domains to their responsibility, basically in the economic field. We have some ideas what will be these domains, but the chairman has suggested that we shall not specify it right now. We have to go over the different things [words indistinct] ...this will be the second early empowerment, and this will be done before the conclusion of negotiations. It does not have to wait for the conclusion of the negotiations.

Then, we have agreed to work on the building of nine industrial parks, five alongside the West Bank and three alongside the Gaza Strip. One of them will be in the Rafah area, so it will be a joint venture between Egypt, the Palestinian, and ourselves. [number of industrial zones as heard].

We have agreed to establish two committees, one headed by Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya and General Major General 'Uzi Dayan which, as the chairman has already said, to deal with the overall security problems and another committee, headed by Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] and Uri Savir, to deal with the other issues of the civilian nature. These committees will act very quickly and intensively so to solve the problems of the day and free us from having the need of repeating to it.

Then, we have agreed to have an opening or additional meeting of the four parties on the economic affairs, upon the suggestions of the United States of America. The four parties will be the United States, the Palestinians, the Jordanians, and the Israelis. Then, within two to three weeks—originally it was suggested that the chairman and Mr. Rabin will meet in a week from today—but since we agreed today on such a long list of issues, we think that we need another week or so before they will meet, so there will be a content to the meeting, in two to three weeks. There will be a meeting between the prime minister of Israel and the PA head, and there will be some more issues to be dealt with upon the request of either the two sides, and also the two parties will have a good look what did happen of all the agreements we have reached today.

Then, I have announced, on the part of the Israeli Government, that we are going to take the following confidence-building measures: A. There was a halt on the safe-passage agreement. The halt is over and either the Palestinians will agree to the protocol we have suggested, or otherwise, we shall go over the details, but there is no more postponement on it. Then, next week, our ministerial committee on the release of prisoners will meet in a week's time from today, and they will work over the list of the prisoners—men and women—and see what can be done. They will also meet with the PA [words indistinct]. All this will be done in a week's time from today.

The third is that we are going to improve the procedures in the passages and the checkpoints. As a matter of fact, this morning, there was already a meeting between General Shahor and Nabil Sha'th on the details of these passages, and I understand they have reached an understanding and an agreement, and if there are more problems, we shall have [word indistinct]. Then, in the last meeting, the prime minister suggested to Mr. 'Arafat that there will be 150 trucks that will deal with the issues of exports. This too was held up, and again is deblockated [as heard]. It can be put into implementation. Then, I have informed the chairman that tomorrow or on Sunday [12 March], we shall increase the number of permits of people from Gaza and the West Bank to work in Israel. Last time we met, the number was 15,000; 3,500 were added this week; and we shall have an additional several thousand workers. So we shall border [as heard] 21,000 to 22,000 workers, and this will be done tomorrow or on Sunday—I mean the actual permissions.

I was asked by the chairman about our policy on settlements, and I repeated the Israeli policies so there will not be any doubts. By the way, this morning, there was a story in the press that we are going to build 1,200 homes in Ramallah. This is totally unfounded. Our policy on the settlement remains as it was, namely: A. No more settlements in the territories will be built by the government of Israel; B. No more land will be confiscated for settlements or the enlargement of settlements; C. No public or governmental money will be put in to build houses in the settlements. [passage indistinct] I want to make it very clear, as we have promised.

So as you can see, we went over quite a long list of issues [word indistinct] ...businesslike approaches, I think in goodwill. I know it is not simple, neither for the Palestinians nor for us to overcome the many difficulties and contradictory situations, but we are trying very seriously. I want to repeat that whatever we undertook upon ourselves, we are going to implement, including the issues of redeployment, issues of elections, issues of security, and the issue of economic cooperation. Thank you.

We have two ladies, we shall start with the two ladies:

[Unidentified correspondent] Concerning the early empowerment, in what parts of the West Bank will that be implemented?

[Peres] All. It will be employed in the same places that the first five domains of early empowerment were employed, exactly the same. And again, I would like, as

I told the chairman, to repeat it for us. The central issue, if there is a postponement in negotiations, is really the security matters. I appreciate the declaration of the chairman on the security matters. I think that he has clarified the policy of the PA on that issue.

[Correspondent] Concerning the new security committee, how is it different from other joint security committees?

[Peres] This will be a sort of an instant, immediate, and daily contact so this will really be the most, shall I say, hard working and fully empowered committee to deal with all the issues that one party may raise.

[Qol Yisra'el's Yoni Ben-Menahem] *Foreign Minister Peres, what exactly is the agreement that you have to conclude by the end of June? What exactly will the agreement include? Will it deal with ways to implement the second part in the West Bank?*

[Peres] *We want the agreement to be concluded by 1 July. That is, everything that pertains to the autonomy in the territories of the West Bank.*

[Ben-Menahem] *Meaning, an IDF redeployment?*

[Peres] *Not redeployment. An agreement on the redeployment, on the transfer of authorities, on security—perhaps we will start with security—and on economic issues, all the issues on the agenda, including elections.*

[Ben-Menahem] *Does that mean there will be no IDF withdrawal before 1 July?*

[Peres] *Yes.*

[Correspondent] Will the agreements that you are negotiating be any different from the Oslo and the Cairo agreements, or a continuation of them? And, does that mean you will stop examining the separation?

[Peres] It will be exactly the same but, facing the difficulties that we have had, particularly in the domain of security, we are going to do it gradually. The real change is in the graduality of the implementation. We shall have an overall agreement that will be implemented in a gradual manner.

Now, about the separation, I want to explain something. We are not talking about a physical separation. What we are really talking about is really a cooperation in the economic domain and a separation in the political sense. Namely, we do not want to go and run affairs of the Palestinians, we do not want the Palestinians to run the affairs of Israel. So, the nature of the separation will be basically political. The rest, economically, we shall continue to work together.

[Correspondent] What is to guarantee that this time the deadline you have set will be met—because in the past you have set target dates and failed to reach them?

[Peres] We shall try to do our very best. You know we are dealing with an unmapped territory. We do not know even the difficulties we may encounter. So this is really an expression of a desire and a commitment to act in the most accelerated way, and if we shall not find unexpected problems, we shall be on time.

[Correspondent] [Indistinct question regarding the introduction of sacred dates.]

[Peres] In the domain of politics, we are more secular. We are talking about real efforts that we have to do. I want to tell you something which I told the chairman of the PA: Israel is as interested in having early elections in the territories as the Palestinians are. For us, the greatest desire is to have as our neighbor a democratic Palestinian Authority. We are really interested. What postpones the elections is the insistence, which I can understand, of the chairman that they cannot have elections before we shall complete the redeployment. If elections would have to wait for the redeployment [words indistinct]. Now, the redeployment is not a matter of policy, it is a matter of security. We want to be sure that while redeploying our forces, we shall not cause some open opportunities for acts of terror and violence. We told our Palestinians partners time and again that for us the main consideration was and remains the consideration of security.

[Correspondent] What was it that happened in the last few weeks that brought you to this agreement, whereas just a few weeks ago the parties seemed split up? And also, Sir, why are you calling 'Arafat ra'is [previous word in Arabic, meaning president]? He is a president?

[Peres, laughing] I am studying Arabic. I want to tell you, first of all, officially, the title of Yasir 'Arafat in the Arabic language is ra'is. In Hebrew it is yoshev rosh. We have difficulties only in English. When it comes to Hebrew and Arabic, no problem.

Now let me say something else. When Mr. Rabin and Mr. 'Arafat met, I was present. We have informed you that we are going to conduct two sorts of negotiations: one open and the other discreet. Over these weeks [words indistinct] ...is a result of very detailed negotiations. [passage indistinct] ...I am very thankful for this. Some peoples' names cannot be stated officially, but we worked day and night to reach this agreement. And what we see today is really what the ra'is and myself concluded. Those parts of the negotiations that were agreed.

['Arafat answers questions in Arabic]

[Peres, interrupting] May I add in this point that what we have learned in Gaza is two interesting things: The negotiations took more time than we thought, but the implementation took less time than we have planned.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Memorandum Submitted to Arab League on NATO

NC0803165895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1545 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Secretariat General today received a memorandum from the Secretariat of the General People's

Committee of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah on the NATO stance of considering Islam to be the new enemy of the Western states following the collapse of the communist camp.

The Libyan memorandum calls for a meeting of the Joint Arab Defense Pact [JADP] Council to study all aspects of this issue and to adopt a scheme of collective defensive to deter this threat to the Arab homeland. The memorandum expresses the hope that the Arab League Secretariat General will take measures to convene the council as soon as possible.

The memorandum noted that Article 3 of the JADP, signed by the Arab League members on 13 May 1950, stipulates that in the event of an impending war or in the event of a sudden threatening international situation, the contracting states will immediately form unified plans and efforts and take preventive and defensive measures as dictated by the situation.

The memorandum explains NATO's stance and its call on some Arab countries in North Africa to hold a meeting with NATO. It says this meeting is designed to put pressure on these states. This has serious implications and is an attempt to put these countries under NATO's military umbrella—a matter which is considered a sudden international development. The memorandum explains that alliances of a military character should not interfere in the internal issues of independent and sovereign states.

The Libyan memorandum stresses that NATO's stance is part of a plan to implement an imperialist strategy and to directly threaten the national security of the Arab states. It is also a prelude to its intervention in their internal affairs on the pretext of their instability.

Lockerbie To Be on Agenda of Arab League Meeting

LD0903172595 Tripoli JANA in English 1651 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 9 March (JANA)—Dr. Esmat 'Abd-al-Majid the secretary general of the Arab League has confirmed yesterday that the so-called Lockerbie case will be included in the agenda of the 103rd session of the league's council which will be held at foreign ministers level in Cairo on the 22nd of the current month, al Rabie [March].

Dr. Esmat 'Abd-al-Majid made a statement to JANA's correspondant in Cairo in which he said that the developments of the so-called Lockerbie case had been included in the agenda for discussion by the council, on the light of new evidence and further western and American documents confirming the falsehood of Western accusations in the case and also confirm the innocence of the Great Jamahiriya from all Western and American accusations in this issue.

The secretary general of the Arab Leugue highlighted the efforts exerted by the Arab League towards reaching a peaceful and just settlement for the Lockerbie case.

The secretary general of the Arab League also reaffirmed the continued support of the Arab League for the Great Jamahiriya positions and against the unfair sanctions imposed by so-called Security Council. He called for the immediate lifting of the unfair sanctions, on the light of the new evidence that emerged recently which vindicate the Great Jamahiriya.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 28 Feb

NC0903143195

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Rajab Advises People Who Pretend To Be Religious To Withdraw
2. Column Notes Ignorance of Koran Caused Setbacks to Muslims
3. Report Condemns Muslims for Massacring Each Other
4. Writer Says Way To Confront Islam's Enemies Is By Abiding by Laws

RAJAB ADVISES PEOPLE WHO PRETEND TO BE RELIGIOUS TO WITHDRAW

Samir Rajab, in his 300-word "Rightfully I Say" column on page 1, discusses al-Azhar's participation in the celebrations marking the night of the revelation of the Koran to Prophet Muhammad. He states that this participation indicates al-Azhar's concern for restoring Islam's correct image and confronting all those who call for sedition, extremism, and division. Rajab notes that al-Azhar is a very honest and straightforward institute that is not at all showy. Rajab advises those who act and pretend to be religious to withdraw and retire.

COLUMN NOTES IGNORANCE OF KORAN CAUSED SETBACKS TO MUSLIMS

Basyuni al-Halawani, in a 600-word "With All Frankness" column on page 6, praises accurate learning of the Koran. He says Egypt's leadership has honored those who have learned the Koran properly and wants to send a clear message to those who think they can interpret the Koran any way they like. He criticizes Muslims who, he says, make a show of being Muslims but who do not follow its tenets. He suggests that most people's interest in the Koran consists merely of hanging some of the elaborate calligraphic verses on the wall without knowing what they mean. Al-Halawani says: "This ignorance of God's book has been the cause of so much damage and so many setbacks to the Muslims in every sector of life. This is what has pushed the terrorism groups to carry arms, kill, steal, and attack those who truly believe in the Koran. This is what has encouraged the emergence of light-headed people with wild ideas and sick hearts who have no other interest but to attack Islam and its shari'ah and mock every word taken from the book of God." He calls for greater respect in dealing with God's book and for deriving guidance and direction from it.

REPORT CONDEMNS MUSLIMS FOR MASSACRING EACH OTHER

A 400-word report by Muhammad Muhammadayn on page 21 condemns Muslims for massacres it says they commit against each other during the month of Ramadan. He asserts: When they fail to find someone to massacre them, as happened at the Hebron mosque last year, they resort to massacring each other, as happened at the mosque in Karachi, Pakistan, and in an Addis Ababa mosque this year.

WRITER SAYS WAY TO CONFRONT ISLAM'S ENEMIES IS BY ABIDING BY LAWS

'Adil Dayf, in the 300-word "What Do They Want?" column on page 21, discusses what he calls international collusion against Islam. He suggests: "The enemies of the nation agree over the objectives; they differ only in method." They have the common denominator of hatred for Islam and the Muslims, he says. The author states that he believes the way to confront this enemy is to adhere to the shari'ah and abide by God's teachings. The Muslims must also unite their efforts and confront the enemies in one rank, he claims. He states that the Muslims should be proud of their Islam and should defend it as much as they can. The Muslims are capable of overcoming all difficulties, he concludes.

Palestinian Affairs

Quray': 'Arafat-Peres Meeting 'Broke the Stalemate'

JN0903201595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Ahmad Quray', minister of industry and trade in the Palestinian Authority, by Yusuf al-Qazzaz; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Qazzaz] Mr. Ahmad Quray', Good evening.

[Quray'] Good evening.

[Al-Qazzaz] What is the nature of the progress made today at the meeting between President 'Arafat and Shim'on Peres?

[Quray'] Let me say that this meeting was an important step in the right direction to implement the second chapter of the Declaration of Principles [DOP] agreement, signed in Washington in September 1993. After the implementation of this agreement has experienced a severe crisis and seen Israeli maneuvers and attempts to evade its implementation, today in particular saw positive action in the right direction. An agreement has been reached—and this is a positive step—to implement the transitional comprehensive agreement, in all its elements, which include redeployment, the transfer of powers, elections, and security arrangements, between 15 June and 1 July at the latest. Thus, this is the first time that a deadline has been set for the implementation of the second part of the agreement. The second point is that it has been agreed to immediately transfer five new powers to the early powers in the rest of the West Bank. They are in the economic domain. It is no secret that they have to do with trade, industry, workers, oil, gas, and communications. These powers will be handed over to the Palestinian Authority within two weeks maximum. Another important issue is that President Yasir 'Arafat and the Israeli prime minister will, in their upcoming meeting, discuss the possibility not of transferring powers but of an early redeployment in the West Bank, even before agreement is made. But we hope that this will be agreed upon. This is in addition to a host of issues classified as confidence-building measures. These issues are pending the ministerial committee meeting to agree on scheduling the release of prisoners. We also have the question of settlements. President 'Arafat demonstrated a firm and tough stand toward this issue. He demanded a halt and suspension to the process of settlement until the final-status talks. For the first time, and in a semi-joint statement with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian president, Israel has stressed this concept regarding the issue of settlements. In addition, the question of the closure and other issues related to the passageways, checkpoints, and other issues related to the daily living of citizens, have been addressed. Also, the number of workers will be increased. This is in addition to economic issues and a customs zone on the River Jordan and in Rafah and the movement of trucks to and from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and Jordan and Egypt. All these issues were discussed, in addition to a host of security measures and arrangements to maintain security and order.

[Al-Qazzaz] We know that Israeli deadlines are not sacred. Is 15 June-1 July a sacred deadline?

[Quray'] It is not a question of sacred or not. You know that by July a whole year will have passed since the implementation of the transitional agreement. However, naming an objective and setting a deadline to implement the agreement will make the two parties intensify the talks to reach agreement. A deadline was fixed, and the two parties must reach a detailed agreement on the transitional agreement before the expiration of this deadline.

[Al-Qazzaz] Regarding the two-way travel of trucks from the National Authority areas to Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, what has been achieved in this respect?

[Quray'] First of all, the ban on these trucks has been lifted. We have also raised the issue of remodeling these trucks or adding new trucks. These trucks have a right to go to Jordan while loaded with Palestinian goods and to return loaded with Jordanian goods. The same goes for Egypt.

[Al-Qazzaz] Has there been coordination with Jordan and Egypt on this issue?

[Quray'] These issues have been raised with the brothers in Jordan, and there is an agreement, as you know. There will also be a committee of experts with our brothers in Egypt next week. The committee will meet next week or in 10 days to pave the way for a meeting of the joint Palestinian-Egyptian committee to review all aspects of economic relations between Egypt and the Palestinian Authority.

[Al-Qazzaz] Regarding the settlements, has Peres reiterated his government's stand by rejecting the continuation of settlement activity?

[Quray'] As a matter of fact, he reiterated the well-known Israeli position, or let me say the well-known position of the Labor Government, namely, not to invest money in settlement activity, not to confiscate territory, not to expand and build new settlements. However, we have demanded a suspension of settlement activity. We mentioned, for example, what was said today about a plan by the Israeli housing minister to build 2,600 housing units in Ramallah. For the first time, the Israeli foreign minister categorically denied this report. He said there is no possibility of getting the approval of the competent ministerial committee in this respect. He also said that settlements should not be expanded.

[Al-Qazzaz] Have you discussed the release of prisoners?

[Quray'] No doubt this issue was raised. It was a main issue on the agenda. It has been agreed that a competent ministerial committee from the two sides will meet next week to discuss this issue and schedule the release of prisoners.

[Al-Qazzaz] So today's meeting broke the stalemate in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations?

[Quray'] No doubt, it has indeed broken the stalemate and paved the way for serious negotiations to reach agreement.

[Al-Qazzaz] Than you Mr. Ahmad Quray, Abu-'Ala', minister of industry and trade in the National Authority.

[Quray'] You are welcome.

'Arafat Adviser: Peres Meeting Prompts 'Some Optimism'

JN1003072995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Palestinian political circles have assessed the recent meeting between His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres with some optimism. [passage omitted]

Commenting on the meeting, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, said:

[Begin recording] At the meeting between President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and Mr. Peres, Israel reiterated its commitment to implement the second part of the Declaration of Principles [DOP] before 15 June 1995 at the latest. During that period, there will be a gradual implementation of the agreement. Agreement was also reached to transfer power to the National Authority [NA] in five economic fields, and to hold a meeting of the ministerial committee for scheduling the release of the detainees. The Israeli side also emphasized that the Israeli Government had agreed to suspend the establishment or expansion of settlements.

The Palestinian side was also informed that the closure of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will be gradually lifted; there was talk about increasing the number of workers to 3,500 workers in addition to the previous figures. The discussion during the meeting dealt with the question of the NA taking over the Erez area as stipulated in the Cairo agreement. It was agreed to refer this topic to a committee for discussion.

The Palestinian and Israeli sides agreed on a summit between President Abu-'Ammar and Rabin in the next two weeks to assess the negotiations process and the possibility of an early redeployment of the Israeli forces in the West Bank in preparation for the elections.

After this, President Abu-'Ammar held a news conference in which he stressed that everybody should understand that the Palestinian police force is the only party responsible for security, order, and stability in the NA areas. President Abu-'Ammar said he hopes the DoP will be implemented in the other West Bank areas as soon as possible. He said the success of the meeting depends on what is implemented, particularly the issue of the redeployment and the elections, which are the two major topics for the second stage. President Abu-'Ammar called for respecting dates and issues on which agreement is reached, and reiterated the need to freeze settlements and to expeditiously hold a meeting of the ministerial committee for releasing detainees. It was agreed that the ministerial committee will meet soon.

President Abu-'Ammar reaffirmed that implementation is what is important and that this is the test and real yardstick for agreements. [end recording]

'Arafat To Tell Christopher No Progress in Talks

TA1003092395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat will tell Secretary of State Christopher today that the negotiations with Israel on elections in the territories and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in the West Bank have made no progress. A senior Palestinian Authority source has told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that Minister Peres' announcement on a breakthrough in the talks with the Palestinians was a public relations stunt on the occasion of Secretary Christopher's visit.

'Arafat is demanding that Israel lift the closure at once. He rejects the Israeli decision to ease the closure by allowing 3,000 more Palestinians to work in Israel.

Commentary on Christopher Plan To Pressure Arabs

JN0903204195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Station commentary: "A Swift Salvage is Needed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of the first leg of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, the nature of the mission, which required his visit to the region, has been revealed. Also, the nature of the ideas he is bringing with him has been revealed. The visit aims at breaking the stalemate on the various Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks and ending the crisis between Israeli and Egypt resulting from the Israeli Government's refusal to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The first signs of the fact that Mr. Christopher is topping his agenda with the task of exerting more pressure on the Arabs in general, and on us in particular, clearly appeared in the Egyptian papers.

Within this context, it is not difficult to feel out the mission of the U.S. secretary on his Palestinian stop when he meets with His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza tomorrow. He is expected to repeat the same lingo about the American-Israeli understanding of peace, the importance of uprooting terrorism, and other terms imposed by Israel on the dictionary of the ongoing peace process.

Whether Christopher's new mission in the region aims at breaking the wall of ice separating Israel and the various parties to the peace process, removing the obstacles to this process, or putting pressure on the Palestinian side and the rest of the Arab parties to soften their stands—which are viewed by Israel and the U.S. Administration as rigid stands—the fact the U.S. secretary should clearly and frankly acknowledge is that the Israeli concept of peace, which is supported by the United States, is not acceptable. He should also acknowledge that the present crisis can only be overcome if the Rabin government can show whatever will prove its good intentions and its seriousness in continuing the peace process and if it fulfills its pledges and commitments vis-a-vis this process.

It is no longer acceptable to ask the National Authority to offer a solution at the expense of national Palestinian rights to please the Israeli side. It is time the United States played its full role as an unbiased sponsor of the peace process, revived the bases of the peace process now that it has entered the state of stalemate, and saved the peace process from the inevitable fate it will befall if the Rabin government continues to dig the grave of peace while the U.S. Administration is preparing the funeral rituals.

Al-Husayni Waiting for 'Concrete' Israeli Moves

TA1003074295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority is afraid that the Peres-'Arafat meeting yesterday aimed only to meet the Israeli need to show progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Last night 'Arafat held consultations in his office, and he plans to voice his apprehensions at his meeting with Christopher in Gaza today.

Concerning the 'Arafat-Peres agreement to wind up the negotiations by the end of June, the Palestinians say timetables have been set before, but Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin did not adhere to them on the pretext that dates are not sacrosanct.

Faysal al-Husayni says it all depends on Israel's intentions:

[Begin recording] [al-Husayni] So far, we have had words. I would like to see things happening on the ground. I am not optimistic or pessimistic; I am waiting.

[Ben-Menahem] What are the Palestinians really waiting for?

[Al-Husayni] We are waiting to see what happens. If the Israelis really intend to conclude the matter in June, they should start by taking several concrete steps. If they do, we will know there is a chance. [end recording]

The Palestinians would like Israel to move expeditiously. Its moves may include the immediate release of Palestinian female prisoners and a few hundred other prisoners, a release that was canceled in the wake of the Bet Lid bombing.

Today Faysal al-Husayni and several East Jerusalem dignitaries are leaving for an international symposium in Cairo, but he will return to Jerusalem at the beginning of next week to attend a meeting with British Prime Minister John Major at the UK Consulate in East Jerusalem.

'Abd-al-Shafi: Israeli Settlements 'Destroying' Peace

AU0903154895 Vienna KURIER in German 9 Mar 95 p 5

[Interview with Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, former head of the delegation to the Washington peace talks, by Tessa Szyszkowitz in Gaza; date not given: "The Israeli Settlements Are Destroying the Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Szyszkowitz] Dr. Abd-al-Shafi, you have always criticized the Oslo agreement. Has it failed? Has the peace process failed?

['Abd-al-Shafi] We Palestinians have decided to make peace with Israel. There is no going back—first, because we would lose our credibility, and second, because the majority here wants peace with Israel.

[Szyszkowitz] Yet what is wrong with the process?

['Abd-al-Shafi] The world believes that the Islamic bombs are to blame. Yet this is a historic mistake. The Israelis who continue to build their settlements are responsible. If they continue to establish settlements in the West Bank, there will be no room for a state!

[Szyszkowitz] Do you not think that, apart from the Israeli Government, the Palestinian leadership is to blame as well?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Of course. The Palestinian leadership is becoming increasingly repressive. One cannot speak of the establishment of a democratic state. I believe that 'Arafat and his team want to be more liberal than the neighboring Arab regimes. Yet this is not enough.

[Szyszkowitz] The Palestinian opposition groups in Damascus want to include you in the "National Front" platform, which rejects the Oslo agreement and 'Arafat's style of leadership. Will you participate?

['Abd-al-Shafi] No, I will not. Such groups do not offer an alternative. I can understand the logic of armed struggle, but I do not believe that bombs will get us anywhere. I believe that we need a national unity government. Such governments are usually formed in times of crisis. For this reason, I also told 'Arafat to suspend negotiations with Israel and to send diplomats to Europe who should make it clear that it is not bombs that are destroying the peace process but the Israeli settlements.

[Szyszkowitz] What will happen if this public relations campaign is not successful and Europe does not increase pressure on Israel?

['Abd-al-Shafi] There is no quick solution. One thing must be understood by all sides: We should stop being so impatient. Only a carefully thought out process that consists of various stages will bring peace.

British Official To Visit Orient House 12 Mar

JN0903204695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior British Foreign Office official will visit Orient House in occupied Jerusalem on Sunday [12 March], the British Foreign Office announced today.

Douglas Hogg, British minister of state at the Foreign Office who will accompany British Prime Minister John Major, was scheduled to visit Orient House for talks with Faysal al-Husayni, the official in charge of the Jerusalem file in the National Authority. The visit, however, has been called off because of Israeli protests.

Hamas Backs Down on Latest Agreement With PA

NC0903184795 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 1 Mar 95 p 6

[Report by Tariq Hasan in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] A senior official in the Palestinian Authority [PA] has accused the opposition religious organization Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] of reneging on an agreement it concluded with the PA several days ago.

The official, who asked to remain unidentified, revealed that the agreement is comprised of eight points, the most important of which was the Hamas demand to be allowed to establish a political party and the PA's approval of this demand on condition that the party use democratic political means and that Hamas accept the principle of political pluralism. He added that Hamas accepted this condition which was incorporated as a clause in the agreement.

The official went on to say that Hamas had asked to be included in the PA bodies, up to the level of ministry under secretary, in addition to participation in the municipal councils in the PA areas. It also asked the PA to protect its military cadres, especially those being pursued. Hamas also agreed to lay down or to control the weapons it has and to express its opposition to the Oslo agreement with democratic political means only. Hamas also recognized the PA as the sole authority inside the self-rule areas and agreed to solve the issue of the bloody incident in the Filastin Mosque in Gaza, which took place three months ago, by referring it to the civilian and shari'ah judiciary. This was regarded as a concession on the part of Hamas, which had earlier demanded the formation of judicial and popular committees to pinpoint the party responsible and bring it to account legally and politically.

The official said that the PA had asked that this document be registered with Palestinian Justice Minister Furayh Abu-Middayn. He added that the agreement was concluded following a contact by Hamas on 15 Ramadan [15 February] and was initiated by two of its leaders—al-Faluji and Sayyid Abu-Musamih—with Major General Nasr Yusuf, commander of the Palestinian security forces in Gaza. The agreement, which was reached on 17 Ramadan, was preceded by intensive deliberations in which the PA side was represented by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat; al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the PA Presidency; Hakam Bal'awi, the Palestinian ambassador in Tunisia, who was in Gaza at the time; and Major General Nasr Yusuf. The document was amended twice at the PA's request and the final text was concluded and witnessed by Shaykh Abu-Sirdanah, the head of the shari'ah judges.

The official added that Maj. Gen. Yusuf told 'Arafat before the latter travelled to Paris that al-Faluji and Abu-Musamih had told him that Hamas had approved the final text of the agreement. But in a statement issued last *Sunday [26 February]*, Hamas backed down on the agreement concluded by its local command in Gaza, on the pretext that the PA's practices have prejudiced the opportunities for national dialog. It made the dialog contingent on the PA's admission of the failure of the Oslo and Cairo agreements and their abandonment.

The official said that this is not the first time that Hamas has reneged on agreements concluded with the PA. He referred to another six-point agreement reached three months ago with 'Imad al-Faluji, which Hamas then reneged on. The Palestinian official cast doubts about Hamas' seriousness in seeking a dialog with the PA. He said that Hamas had at first refused to hold these dialogs with the Fatah Movement and asked to talk to the PA. A conciliatory formula was reached stipulating that the dialog would be between parties; and it was understood that this meant that the dialog would be between the PA and Hamas, but Hamas then came back and said that it would refuse to have a dialog with the PA.

He added: They are using the dialog to test and deceive the PA, as evidenced by the fact that they knew that the PA had chosen al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim and Palestinian Housing Minister Zakariya al-Agha as a specific channel for the dialog with them, but they persisted in bypassing them in favor of opening a dialog through Maj. Gen. Yusuf.

He stressed that Hamas' strategy is to bring down the PA and that it is using the dialog as a tactic. He added that Hamas' decision is not in the hands of its leaders in Gaza, but those abroad who vociferously object whenever we reach an agreement. He referred in this respect to Ibrahim Ghawshah, Muhammad Nazzal, and Musa Abu- Marzuq, the most prominent Hamas leaders abroad. He said: To confirm this, we asked who our interlocutor is among the Hamas leaders in Gaza and asked if they were speaking on behalf of Hamas. They did not give us any answer.

Hamas: Right to Repatriation Not Subject to 'Bargains'

JN0903185095 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the meeting of the so-called quadripartite refugee committee in Amman on 7 March, an official source at the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said in a statement that the meeting of this committee is no different from the meetings of other committees emanating from the ominous agreements with the Zionist enemy aiming for generally destructive solutions.

The source said that Hamas reiterates its refusal to consider our entire people's right to return to their territory an issue that is subject to bargains or negotiations with the usurpers of this right. He said the movement stresses that it will continue efforts to attain this right and all other usurped Palestinian rights.

The source warned the Arab parties against accepting the Zionist objective seeking to consider the right to repatriation an issue subject to bargains.

Islamic Jihad Envoy Assails Christopher's Tour

NC0903205495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Abu-Jihad, representative of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement in Tehran by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated text] [Correspondent] Christopher has made statements in Cairo that one of the U.S. and the Zionist entity's conditions for implementing the Oslo Accord provision on self-rule is confrontation with what he called Islamic fundamentalism. We would like to hear your comment on this.

[Abu-Jihad] Actually, Warren Christopher's latest statement brought nothing new, nor did it surprise us. The U.S. stand has been known to us for a long time. I would like to pause at this important point regarding the true U.S. stand.

I believe that after the Bet Lid martyrdom operation which the Islamic Jihad Movement carried out on 22 January, the United States sponsored a regional security meeting. The United States encouraged this meeting—which was dubbed the regional Cairo meeting and comprised Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the self-rule Authority. There was only one topic on its agenda—confronting the Muslim mujahidin in Palestine, or what they call the confrontation with fundamentalist terrorism.

This meeting coincided with U.S. Secretary of Trade Brown's visit. He made a statement in Jerusalem, saying that he would discuss with Yasir 'Arafat the need to prevent terrorist operations, as he put it. He said we must link security interests and development, and that peace and stability are essential. He added that terrorism constitutes the main obstacle to peace and development. This is what the trade secretary said at the Taba conference.

Also at that time, last month, the Washington meeting was held under direct U.S. sponsorship between high-level officials from Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the self-rule authorities. Again there was one topic on this meeting's agenda, it was confrontation with the mujahidin or what they call violence, terrorism, fundamentalism, and many other terms.

We believe that the U.S. is eager to act within the context of Israeli security and interests. According to U.S. claims, the United States was supposed to be sponsoring the so-called peace process. But it has become clear now that the United States has turned into a sponsor of Israel's security, political, and economic interests at the expense of the interests of Arabs, Muslims, and the Palestinian people.

They are increasing pressure on the self-rule Authority; and if the Authority responds to U.S. and Israeli pressure, this actually shows that they want to completely destroy the self-rule leadership. The current deadlock in the peace process is very serious and cannot bear further pressure. 'Arafat is unable to implement more security measures in the Gaza Strip unless the U.S.-Israeli want to run him from the political arena.

Their slogan about uprooting the Islamic movement or the Muslim mujahidin, or what they term terrorism has become obsolete and illogical in view of what we see in the occupation in Palestine. This occupation is terrorism itself. The closure of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and the murder of innocent Palestinians is terrorism.

How can we explain the situation when the Israeli army in Gaza, from where they claim to have withdrawn, shot martyr Usamah al-Burnu a few days ago? We believe that the Palestinian people have a right to revenge against the murderers and to demand all their territory and homeland.

The U.S. stand has become clear to us, and every day the truth of this U.S. stand is revealed more and more. This is a stand of hostility and evil against the Arab and Islamic nation in general and against the Palestinian people's interests in particular. It is only concerned about the interests of a regionally strong Israel, an Israel that is dominant in security, economic, and political terms. It does not care about anything else.

The best proof of this is that if the Palestinian people's demand for their land is called terrorism, then what should we call Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty? Is this not terrorism? According to the crooked, dual-standard U.S. logic, this Israeli defiance of the world and the region is not called terrorism, but the Palestinian mujahidin who demand their rights are termed terrorists. We believe that Christopher's latest visit falls into this context, the context of the United States' hostility toward the Islamic nation, the Palestinian people, and their interests.

Algeria

Car Bomb Explodes in Kouba Area, Injures 33

LD1003114195 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A booby-trapped car exploded this morning at around 0550 in Cite Garidi [council estate], near buildings 1 and 2 of the estate, in Kouba. The news was announced by the security services which added that 33 people, including eight children, were injured in the explosion and that the fronts of the two buildings were also damaged.

Sifi Rejects Reports of Impending Civil War

AU1003121595 Hamburg DIE ZEIT in German 10 Mar 95 p 3

[Interview with Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi by Michael Lueders; place and date not given: "Algeria Is Not Bosnia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lueders] Mr. Prime Minister, is Algeria moving toward civil war?

[Sifi] I do not know what gives you this idea. Occasionally, the security situation is difficult, but Algeria is not Bosnia. It is the foreign media that claim there is a civil war in Algeria. Sometimes I get the impression that these circles are virtually wishing us to be at war.

[Lueders] But the situation is serious enough. Each week hundreds of people are dying as a result of violence.

[Sifi] Where did you get these figures from? These are rumors, not facts.

[Lueders] How many dead have you counted?

[Sifi] I do not remember the exact figures. It is correct that there is one or the other incident every day, but not in the scope you mentioned. Life takes it normal course, the authorities and companies are working normally, the economic upswing continues.

[Lueders] Why does the Government have so much trouble negotiating with the Islamic fundamentalists?

[Sifi] We are looking for dialogue with all social forces. However, President Zeroual does not talk to people who do not distance themselves from terrorism.

[Lueders] Nevertheless, President Zeroual held talks with FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] leaders Belhadj and Madani last years. He even visited them in prison.

[Sifi] There were contacts at the defense minister's initiative. The government made it clear that it will talk with anyone who condemns terrorism. Subsequently, in September 1994 Mr. Madani wrote a letter to the president, which clearly says that he does not intend to distance himself from terrorism.

[Lueders] Thus, you are relying on the military.

[Sifi] No. Our goal is to overcome the political crisis by holding free presidential elections by the end of this year.

[Lueders] Without the fundamentalists, the winners of the previous elections, which were stopped.

[Sifi] At that time the people did not vote for the FIS but against the old regime.

[Lueders] Then the military putsch three years ago would not have been necessary.

[Sifi] You are quite right: It is a virtually incredible event to interrupt an election process. But what happens if the nation's fate is at stake? The terrorism of the Islamic fundamentalists was a sad reality already then.

[Lueders] So, when will there be peace in Algeria?

[Sifi] The country is going through a severe crisis, and no one can say with certainty how things will develop. We hope that the situation will calm down after the presidential elections. We have deliberately decided in favor of presidential elections and against parliamentary elections, because the former can be held more easily. There is not the problem of election tickets, etc.

FIS Abroad Calls For Break in Diplomatic Relations

LD0903195095 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The parliamentary delegation of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] abroad renewed its call for the international community to break off all diplomatic relations with Algiers.

In another development, former President Ahmed Ben Bella points an accusing finger at French aid to Algeria. He says that Paris is adding fuel to the fire by allowing Algiers to buy arms and helicopters, end of quote.

Western Companies Discover Oil Deposits in Sahara

LD0803213095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sonatrach Company and its Danish, British, and American partners, who have been drilling for oil together in the Erg Oriental region, today announced that they had made a fifth discovery in the region.

The discovery had been made at the sector which has symbolically been known by the number 404; it is situated at South (Hassi Berkine) in the Erg Oriental region, some 250 Km south-east of Hassi Messaoud.

Sonatrach's statement said that the depth of the discovered oil well was 3,400 meters.

Sonatrach has estimated the oil reserve at the five discoveries to be between 150 and 1,250 million barrels.

Sonatrach's statement pointed out, however, that it would only be possible to give a good estimate of oil reserves in the region after new explorations were carried out.

According the statement, Sonatrach and its partners were trying to draw up a plan for oil production at the discoveries.

Sonatrach was, however, expecting that the production at the new discoveries would begin next year with an average of 30,000 barrels per day in this region. It is expected, however, that the production would grow yearly in line with production techniques used at those wells.

Money Allocated for Development of South

LD0903234595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] To implement the government's special program to develop the areas of the greater south, about 7 billion dinars will be allocated in the first stage to develop the agriculture, food industry, power, and irrigation sectors, thus creating 150,000 jobs. [passage omitted]

Nahnah on Rome Document, U.S.-Islamist Ties

95AF0051A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 10 Feb 95 pp 18-20

[Interview with HAMAS leader Mahfoud Nahnah, by Mufid 'Abd-al-Rahim in Washington; date not given: "Some 'Islamists' Are Taking Women Prisoners!"—first paragraph is AL-WATAN AL'ARABI introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The leader of Algeria's Islamic Society Movement (HAMAS), Shaykh Mahfouz Nahnah, has reaffirmed his support for the recent Rome document produced by the representatives of Algeria's opposition parties who met in the Italian capital during the first week of this month. It was rejected by their military wings, however, and by the authorities in Algiers. Nahnah condemned the Algerian Government's rejection of the document, saying that it was a rejection of the Algerian Constitution. In spite of his reservations about some of the provisions of the final communique, Shaykh Nahnah denied that his absence at the second Rome meeting was because of a disagreement between him and the principals in the dialogue, alluding to several reasons, including "the cutting of telephone and fax lines in the area where the Front's [Islamic Salvation Front] offices are located," and his "commitment to appointments outside of Algeria." In this interview, Nahnah spoke at length with AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Washington, which he was visiting for the second time in five months. He touched on the French-American rivalry over Algeria, and called on the two countries to adopt policies "based on the policies of their peoples and the Algerian people as well." While the Algerian shaykh did not deny there have been contacts between him and U.S. officials, he did say that this dialogue "was just beginning, and every beginning has an end."

['Abd-al-Rahim] For three years Algeria has been going through a bloody, desperate crisis. Where does Algeria stand now, after these three years, especially in light of the recent Rome document?

[Nahnah] The political crisis in Algeria now is the natural cumulative result of the illegitimate political regime and political despotism, which have both alienated opposing opinion.

The process of moving from the one-party system to party pluralism was a costly one, not only in Algeria but in many other countries of the world, when they wanted to make the move to pluralism and open the door to various freedoms. Algeria is now experiencing an unenviable period, especially given the mutual violence whose only victims, as we see it, are the people, the Islamic plan, and the plan for national unity. It could lead, God forbid, through outside pressure, to normalization and surrender to the Israeli plan. Thus Algeria is now in the process of extricating itself from the cycle of violence and its cocoon of political backwardness, taking politically progressive positions, and moving from being a one-party state to embracing party pluralism, which is a state of labor pains—no easy thing.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Do you see, in your contacts, what you might call promising signs from the Algerian Government that there is still a chance for a peaceful political solution?

[Nahnah] We firmly believe that the solution for Algeria can only come from sound political thinking. Through our broad network of contacts, we have found that all sides that were in conflict over accepting a political solution, through dialogue, have now started to move toward accepting dialogue. Political dialogue has not come to a halt, neither between political parties nor between the parties and the government, nor even between the two primary warring sides, which are the government and FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]. Thus hope is still linked to dialogue reaching shore safely. In our view, snowballs melt in the language of dialogue, accord, and the very minimum of mutual understanding, leading to a way out of the crisis.

['Abd-al-Rahim] From what you say, it appears that you have not lost hope in the possibility of the warring sides reaching a laudable political solution to the current Algerian crisis.

[Nahnah] We believe in more than that. We believe that the government's rhetoric, as regards dialogue, still bespeaks openness. We see this as a positive sign, and we can also see the evolution of FIS's political mechanism and its political discourse as signs of a relaxed position. We must support every movement towards the drying of tears and lighting of candles of hope for all the people of our country.

['Abd-al-Rahim] In light of that, what is your opinion of the recent Rome statement?

[Nahnah] The first and second Rome meetings are considered to be among the most significant events that could gather political parties in Algeria or abroad for achieving a sort of coexistence between conflicting political ideas. This had never been achievable before, neither on the government's part or that of the parties. The fact that these fronts reached this point is proof most of all that relaxation can occur, and that everyone is in agreement on not tampering with the constitution. We see this as one of the most important achievements, because we consider the constitution to be an authority for all Algerians, through which they can solve their problems, because the constitution says first and foremost that Islam is the state religion. This is a very important issue, and we want to go from exalting Islam as the state religion to *implementing* Islam as the state religion. Secondly, the basic freedoms stipulated in the constitution enjoyed the support of the parties attending the Rome meeting, as well as of those that did not attend. It also enjoyed the consent of the government. So there is something that brings all Algerians together. What is needed is only an escape from the cycle of hatreds and settling political scores. In our opinion, these two meetings, which might be followed by other meetings, will definitely fire up the energy of ordinary Algerians.

The Fax Is To Blame

['Abd-al-Rahim] Might you explain to us whether you had disagreements with the members of the Rome meeting, and whether that was why you decided not to attend?

[Nahnah] No, not at all. Perhaps there were some technical considerations, as the district in which our offices are located in the Algerian capital had its telephone and fax lines cut. This prevented us from receiving their messages inviting us. The second thing was our presence abroad, which made it unfeasible for us to return to Algeria and go on to Rome. In spite of that, thank God, we were among the first invited to the dialogue at home and abroad with the participation of all the principals of the political class. We cannot avoid a dialogue whose terms are free of Kalashnikovs.

['Abd-al-Rahim] You did not attend the second Rome meeting, but you did attend the first one. Would you have gone along with the contents of its final communique?

[Nahnah] We are wary of the first and second communiques, especially because of some paragraphs relating to issues having nothing to do with essence of Algeria's crisis.

['Abd-al-Rahim] What were these provisions that prevented your full endorsement of the document?

[Nahnah] Algeria's current crisis is a crisis of the shedding of the blood of Algerian Muslims, along with the flowing of the blood and tears of innocent people, both our citizens and others. In our movement we see this as the major issue, after the establishment of a democratic course and the preservation of basic freedoms and human rights. As regards the cultural points put foward—as if massing to halt the bloodshed—we do not know who it is who seeks to intensify the crisis by adding these paragraphs. We are absolutely ready to study any issue, especially the issue of cultural affairs, which we believe in our country must be integrative, instead of rusting away, as is planned for them, God forbid.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Would you mind indicating the specific paragraphs in the final communique of the second Rome meeting?

[Nahnah] I just did, because the issue of cultural affairs is an example of that. The second thing is in the lack of balance in the issue of the existing violence in Algeria. While heads are being chopped off, rights infringed, blood being shed, and property being plundered by groups said to be Islamic, but which have nothing to do with Islam, we admire the development of FIS's political discourse, on the part of those who proclaim their innocence of operations that harm Islam and Muslims and their organization. We thus see it as the duty of sincere people in the political class to give this their full attention, and to put a halt to these acts, of which, as I said, we are innocent.

['Abd-al-Rahim] So you are in general agreement with the recent statement, except as relates to cultural affairs and the absence of the abolition of acts of violence attributed to Islam and the Islamists?

[Nahnah] Insofar as the statement is in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, we agree with it, and we accept it without embarrassment. Indeed the fact of the matter is that we may have been made to feel uneasy by the statements of the government spokesman, who once described the Rome meeting as a "non-event," and another time said "we reject it in whole and in part." This rejection contains a rejection of the principles and spirit of the Constitution, and rejection of the official statements of Mr. Liamine Zeroual, both when he was minister of defense and after he became head of state. Thus we believe these remarks cannot express the truth of the statement.

['Abd-al-Rahim] The recent Rome statement, which FIS signed in the name of FIS officials Rabeh Kebir and Anouar Haddam, was rejected by FIS's military wing in Algeria. What does that mean? Does it mean that the movement is no longer a united one, speaking with one voice—or what?

[Nahnah] It's as if with this question you are trying to get me into a conflict with these and those. But one may say that armed action has its people, and FIS has its people, and it is within the ability of both sides to agree on an opinion that rules out a gun at the negotiating table. The second thing is that if there is a certain dissension in their positions, then the question should be asked of those directly involved.

Un-Islamic Practices

['Abd-al-Rahim] I want to ask you about an issue you have alluded to fleetingly, which was reported in news reports: Some practices you said were not in conformity with Islam, such as temporary marriage for pleasure, dishonoring women, robbery, plunder, and other such practices associated with the Armed Islamic Groups in Algeria. Can you confirm the existence of these practices?

[Nahnah] The inescapable truth, which some political entities try to use to their advantage in a political auction, is that there are very, very many practices, such as killing innocents and dishonoring woman, either under the heading of temporary marriage or taking women captive. There are bases for both these practices, which have to do with some sects, or the texts of some sects, making it obligatory for interpreters of Islamic law to assert Islamic law when dealing with them.

The other thing has to do with the destruction of the country's achievements: roads, bridges, schools, trains, and buses, of which more than a thousand have been burned. More than 650 schools have been burned down, more than 30 high schools, and more than 35 technological institutes. Needless to say these are practices that religion cannot accept, nor can any rationality or logic justify them, to say nothing of any person with a shred of patriotism. They are practices which, we hear, some in FIS regret or refuse to be associated with. Thus it is essential that the clergy inside and outside Algeria assert that such practices have nothing to do with Islam; that indeed they are the result of corrupted religiosity, uncontrolled emotional stimulation, intellectual infiltration, or penetration that wishes to scorch the holy earth of Algeria. It is a method we do not accept on Muslim land under any circumstances. We are afraid that these practicies might give a distorted picture of the truth of Islam, on top of the frightful and cruel series of events occurring in Afghanistan. We in the Islamic Society Movement reject the Afghanization, Rwandization, Somalization or even the Lebanonization of our country.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Many close observers of the situation in Algeria, in the United States, believe that the true Algerian crisis is hidden; that the situation there is headed in a direction where neither the Islamic movements nor the ruling authority is capable of deciding matters in their own interest any time soon. That means the crisis will drag on, meaning the continuation of bloodshed and the destruction of civilian society in Algeria. Do you agree?

[Nahnah] I do agree. But one must add the following: First of all, it is shameful for global, Arab, Islamic, and national public opinion to see our achievements being destroyed by our own citizens, in effect seeing people destroying their own abode, and yet for public opinion to be silent at these practices. Second, the basis of the problem is that the country in its current state suffers from a problem of legitimacy. This problem has not been satisfactorily solved so far. Some believe that if the current crisis continues, it will either maintain a wobbly legitimacy or bring in a new legitimacy that might cause, and I stress the word might, the self-destruction of a country of 27 million people. The third thing is that legitimacy must be restored, and it must be restored via the ballot box, far from pressure and coercion, fraud, and procrastination. If we reach that point it will be great. If everyone follows the big stick policy, or the policy of breaking bones, then we think prevailing economic conditions in this Algerian situation might be ignored. It has been decided that next month, March, the agreements with the International Monetary Fund are going to run out. Here some sides in the governing agencies, and some eliminationist sides in the government, and in armed action, want this struggle and fighting to continue with the aim of gaining time and winning the friendship of the IMF. Thus we see that these narrow views at the expense of the Algerian people and its potential will lead to greater losses that could reach the point of civil war, or shake the country's sovereignty. We believe in the survival of the country and its prestige. But given the successive and overthrown governments and their daily practices, we must oppose the way it is governed.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Some people here think the popularity of some Algerian parties that did not do well in the 1992 elections, one of which we might mention is the FLN [National Liberation Front], have begun to rise now. They say that ordinary citizens are seeking some stability in Algeria; stability was a major trait of the 30 years of FLN rule that preceded the outbreak of the recent crisis. And some go so far as to say that if elections were to be held now, the FLN would win—that is, neither the current government nor the Islamists would win. Do you think that is true?

[Nahnah] We say the FLN was a ruling and revolutionary party with its own record and positive points, yet it carries some very negative seeds, perhaps even the seeds of its own destruction. Were it not for the current pluralistic political action, the FLN question would not exist. We consider it to be the property of all the people of Algeria. As regards the FLN's renewed popularity, all political action, such as the line of the statement, rises at some times, and falls at other times. It is no secret that the FLN cannot be made to disappear with the stroke of a pen, so it will inevitably have a role in the future course of Algeria. That does not mean that we agree with what it did to the country in its reign, bringing it to the brink of bankruptcy. We say that the FLN should not be cheated of its political rights. But that cannot mean the FLN going back to ruling Algeria by itself, given that there are some lines invisible to the naked eye, still working in secret, and the FLN wanting to return to power on a white horse.

American-French Rivalry

['Abd-al-Rahim] How do you see the American position on the recent events in Algeria? Do you see, in your contacts here, a chance for bringing about change soon in this position?

[Nahnah] The American position seems two-faced to us: first there is the Americans' wish not to confront Islam or take away the right to speech, and to grant human rights and freedoms. We are in total agreement on this. Second, they want to maintain a relationship with the government. The double-standard in the rhetoric of many American institutions has made our public opinion less than completely reassured when it comes to American policies, because of their two-faced statements. The other thing is that the United States had a major role in changing things and establishing the foundations of democracy in Algeria. This has made the French try to follow the American caravan, especially as the rivalry between the two powerful countries is at its most intense on the significant issue of Algeria, from the geopolitical point of view. France has its interests and the Americans have theirs, though these interests might lead to calamities that those dealing with the superpowers cannot notice until it is too late. Therefore we say it is essential that the political class in Algeria—whether in power or in opposition—be governed, in its decisions, by the country's own best interests. Any move here or there to plunge into the lap of this or that power would mean the destruction of the country. The resources of the Arab and Islamic countries are now open to theft and exploitation of all kinds, especially the locating of the blazing centers inside the Arab world, preparatory to normalization with Israel.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Have you sensed, in your talks—and I know you have conducted some talks with American officials—that there are indications of an opportunity for bringing about a change in the U.S. position in the direction, for example, of supporting one movement against another in the Algerian crisis? I say this given what is said about Washington being virtually on the verge of deciding its policy in favor of the Islamists, or confirming the interests of what it considers to be the most moderate party inside the Islamic movement in Algeria.

[Nahnah] It would be shameful for Algeria, with all its blessings and potential, to have its hand out to any country. But if the Americans want to offer support, then let them offer it directly to the Algerian people, not to any party or authority. The Algerian people have their interests, just as the American people have their interests; relations between peoples, not between governments, are lasting.

['Abd-al-Rahim] So you made these demands when you met with the U.S. officials that you met?

[Nahnah] We merely presented our point of view. Perhaps some of these demands reached the Americans only after being distorted by the media, which at times has an interest in obscuring things and at other times in blowing them out of proportion. We sensed this in our discussions with many of the Americans we know. We presented these views in our conversations with the Americans, who are free to make whatever decisions they want, but not free to fragment Algerian unity or impose their views on our people.

['Abd-al-Rahim] As long as we have gotten into the question of your meetings with American officials—and this is your second visit to the United States, as far as I know—might you discuss your conversations and meetings with American officials and others on your recent visit?

[Nahnah] It has not really happened yet in the way you mean. It is just in its beginning, and certainly every beginning has an end. When we get some results we will make them public, because policy in this subject must be clear and free of any ambiguity, refuting all suspicion. The greatest suspicions are those that nationalists are accused of, and that the Islamists are accused of. If Islamists make contacts they are called agents, and if they don't, they are called cowards who have no program. Thus our movement, with others, has the right to make contacts and clarify a vision from our point of view. I imagine that honest people in any country anywhere would concede the essence of moderate Islam, the application of the principles of democracy, the protection of human rights, and hence the interest of peoples.

['Abd-al-Rahim] So you are finding that the Americans have not unalterably ruled out the idea of opening a dialogue with your group in favor of dialogue with other Islamic movements?

[Nahnah] We are saying that there was and is a dialogue and it will remain between us and the citizens of Algeria, and between us and those outside Algeria, especially as Algeria is not unaffected by outside influences, nor does it exist somewhere in the Waq-Waq Islands [i.e., in isolation]. Ours is a country that influences others and is influenced itself. Our people and our country have special traits and qualities, so political life among peoples is one of interests, and of principles also.

['Abd-al-Rahim] How do you view the American-French dispute over the question of Algeria now? There are those who say the gulf between the two sides' positions has recently begun to narrow.

[Nahnah] France has a longing to preserve its political, cultural, and economic hegemony over the nation that taught it a lesson it will never forget. The Americans also have interests in the Arab region in general, and in Algeria in particular. The rivalry of the great can hurt the small, and we may say that we are small, so the Americans and the French must see to it that their competition serves the interests of their peoples and ours too. But if their objective is to trample our honor, to benefit France or America, then that is unacceptable to any sincere Muslim or sincere patriot in our country.

Egypt

Musa 'Very Worried' About Peace Process Future

BR0803154895 Paris LE FIGARO in French 8 Mar 95 p 3

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Claude Lorieux; place and date not given: "'Amr Musa: No Normalization Without Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lorieux] The Arabs worry about the slow pace of the peace process. Some are now using tougher rhetoric, as if they thought the normalization now taking place between Israel and several Arab states such as Oman or Morocco is coming too soon. What about Egypt?

[Musa] Egypt has no objection to Yitzhaq Rabin visiting Oman. However, there can be no normalization without peace. The Israeli must realize this. And yet, if you spell it out to them, they call you an enemy of Israel!

[Lorieux] The PLO and Jordan have made peace with Israel. Egypt thus loses its monopoly. Could it be that it is looking for a new role?

[Musa] We are in a phase of reassessment. We are entering a new system of relations between countries of the region. Egypt must have its say.

[Lorieux] Meaning?

[Musa] Peace with Israel does not mean that the Arab world does not exist any more nor that Egypt should distance itself from the Arab League. Israel should not feel threatened by this.

[Lorieux] You sound almost aggressive?

[Musa] The new regional order is not going to be built according to the sole wishes of the Israeli. Egypt is not going to remain forever the nice guy that says yes to everything.

[Lorieux] What is it that you do not like about Israel's attitude?

[Musa] We felt at the latest international conference, in Casablanca, that Israel wanted to bypass the peace process. And meanwhile, the Palestinians are still waiting for a date to be set for the elections to the autonomous Council, they are still waiting for the redeployment of Israeli troops. The Israeli have a security problem. One cannot bypass the peace process. This had to be said. Peace is irreversible. But progress at the regional level is conditioned by the way the peace process is going.

[Lorieux] In February you had a "lively" conversation with Shim'on Peres in Washington on this issue.

[Musa] The discussion was quite serious. Putting the economy first, as if peace hinged on joint-ventures or road construction is indicative of a very superficial vision. There must be talks on security, disarmament...

[Lorieux] You ask the Israeli to ratify the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. But they are worried about Iran...

[Musa] What kind of an argument is this? A state cannot justify its atomic program by saying that another country might develop its own within ten years. Countries in the region will not take kindly to the notion of a special status for Israel.

[Lorieux] What do you expect will come out of Warren Christopher's trip?

[Musa] The United States still has a role to play. Syria will only negotiate with Israel through the Americans. Mr. Rabin is not going to give new impetus to the Israeli-Palestinian talks by letting another 10,000 Palestinians commute from Gaza to Israel. The problem has deeper roots. Christopher must also deal with the issue of the nonproliferation treaty.

[Lorieux] Election time in the United States and Israel is drawing closer. Are you looking at a deadline for Israeli and Palestinian negotiators?

[Musa] They must achieve something before the summer. I used to be optimistic. But things are not going well at all. I am very worried.

Article Reviews Role of Islam in U.S.

95LD0029C Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 15 Jan 95 p 9

[Article by Rajab al-Banna]

[FBIS Translated Text] The mufti's tour in the United States has been much more successful than expected. It proved that American society is open to all trends. The American people want to learn more about us, although we complain that the Zionist media has dominated their minds. We have not launched campaigns or tried to address the American public in a language they can understand. His Eminence Mufti Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantanwi has succeeded in conveying a correct picture of Islam as a religion of tolerance and peace and not aggression and terrorism. Reverend Dr. Samu'il Habib, head of the Evangelical Church in Egypt, accompanied the mufti on this tour, providing living proof of the Egyptian people's unity and the strength of the existing cooperation between Muslims and Copts.

The tour showed that we have neglected the opportunity to talk in moderate and rational terms to Americans about Islam, and we have left that role to others with suspect motives who provide a gloomy picture that is harmful to Islam as a creed, distorts the image of Muslims, and attaches false accusations to them.

The tour also revealed that the U.S. media treat Islam unfairly, not always deliberately or out of hate, but often because they do not know the facts about Islam. The American people had formed their opinion about Islam, the Islamic shari'ah, and the results of Islamic rule through their bitter experience with the Iranian regime and its policies. These policies lacked any wisdom, were reckless, and addressed the world at the end of the 20th century in the language of the 10th century. They reminded them of the past when the church ruled the state and religious leaders held the reigns of power, controlling the people and interpreting the will of God according to their whims. Perhaps the fighting in Afghanistan, where Muslim blood is shed at the hands of Islamic groups and parties, has given the West a gloomy picture about Islam and the Muslims. We can add to this picture the strange ideas raised in some Islamic countries: rejecting the results of scientific progress, viewing with hostility cultural progress achieved by humanity, and calling for a return to the past. We can also add to it the terrorist operations that have connected Islam with murder, bloodshed, and savagery.

All this has helped to create a negative picture of Islam and Muslims in United States and the West. The Jewish lobby has had a considerable share in creating this picture. However, it has not created this negative image in a vacuum; it exploited the elements of backwardness in Islamic thought, which is accompanied by aggression, murder, and robbery.

Therefore, the mufti's visit to the United States was extremely important. He was warmly received wherever he went; Muslims and Americans came to see him and hear him speak in the mosques, churches, and universities. His reputation reached some intellectual circles in America as a man who represents the moderate and genuine voice of Islam as a religion of tolerance, moderation, love, peace, justice, and equality.

Consequently, the mufti received many invitations to speak. He could not decline, because of the strong insistence. During the 12 days he spent in the United States, he attended meetings from morning until late in the evening. He visited five places Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York City, and Washington. He conducted serious intellectual discussions with 28 groups of American Muslim and Christian leaders. He also met with religious leaders, theologians, and mosque preachers in Christian theological seminaries and Islamic centers. The mufti spoke at four news conferences, attended by representatives of the American press and international and local news agencies. He was interviewed nine times on local and national television, and met with 54 journalists. In his last news conference at the international press center, he answered 60 questions. Dr. Samu'il Habib was with him in all these meetings, confirming, in his answers, the tolerance of Islam and offering proof of the existing cooperation between Muslims and Christians, the abatement in the wave of terrorism, and the democratic character of the regime in Egypt, which does not restrict opinion and thought.

When Vice President Al Gore met with the mufti and Dr. Habib in the White House, he told the mufti that he knew that he represented the genuine and moderate image of Islam, that he carried a message of tolerance and cooperation, that he advocated the establishment of new relations consistent with the real principles of Islam, and that he rejected fanaticism, extremism, and aggression in the name of Islam. He also told him that his visit with the head of the Evangelical Church, his friendship with the Coptic pope, and his call for equality in rights and duties among all Egyptians, irrespective of their religious beliefs, are the subject of appreciation and respect. He invited him to visit the United States again to establish bridges of understanding with public leaders. The visit showed that Islam in the United States is spreading, but that Muslims there need a beacon to show them the right way. There are 6-8 million Muslims in the United States, 40 percent of them blacks. There are 114 mosques, 426 Islamic societies, and thousands of Muslim-run establishments serving Muslims. However, Islamic efforts are not coordinated. The Islamic center in Washington wants Egypt to undertake a leading role in managing it, considering that it was established with Egypt's help. Egypt must establish bridges of communications with the many Islamic institutions, organizations, societies, Muslim leading figures, university professors, and researchers specializing in Islamic studies. Muslims are looking to Egypt because it is the base of Islam, the cradle of al-Azhar, and the bastion of enlightened Islamic thought. Egypt also must increase the number of scholarships for American Muslims at al-Azhar University.

This visit showed that we have misunderstood the American people. We imagined that the campaigns in the American media to distort the image of Islam and the Muslims were deliberate and based on the American people's hatred of Islam. The truth is that most of it has been the result of ignorance, lack of information, and the unavailability of people to explain and clarify the facts. Consequently, it has become possible to attribute every crime committed by a Muslim to Islam and to link Islam with aggression and crime. The American people have formed a rigid mental image of the Muslim as a source of fear, as a backward alien seeking to restore the past, and as a person who harbors blind hatred toward civilization in all its forms, adopting a hostile stand toward Western culture and seeking to destroy it.

The mufti's visit also revealed some shortcomings of the Islamic call organizations in Egypt and other Islamic countries. They have ignored the need to work in the United States, thinking that it is a Christian country. They have failed to realize the change that is taking place in U.S. society, where Islam is spreading quickly. Islam has become the second religion in the United States. This is prompting some researchers seriously to ask: Can Islam become the first religion in the United States in the next century? Islam has become an attractive religion for Americans. When an American learns the truth about Islam, he believes in it.

Finally, the mufti's visit to the United States poses an important question to us: Will we plan and work or will we continue to complain about the Jewish lobby? American society is open. Anybody with a sound idea has an opportunity to explain it. Will we act to change the things we complain about in the United States or will we wait for the impossible to happen and for these things to change by themselves?

Arabs Urged To Restore Economic Ties With Iraq

NC0903170995 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 1 Mar 95 p 8

[From the "Close-Up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: Lifting the Sanctions Imposed on Iraq]

[FBIS Translated Text] International opposition to the arbitrary U.S. stance against Iraq is increasing to such a degree as to make it evident that the international coalition that opposed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait has begun to split. There is a growing international bloc opposed to the continued imposition of the sanctions, since the causes that led to them disappeared when Iraq complied with the resolutions on getting rid of the weapons of mass destruction and on recognizing the State of Kuwait.

The issue of the sanctions on Iraq has gone beyond the situation in the Gulf and become a purely American problem.

The U.S. envoy to the United Nations revealed this truth when she threatened to use the veto if she did not succeed in getting a majority in the Security Council to extend the sanctions resolution, even if Ekeus, head of the UN monitoring team, presents a positive report favorable to Iraq.

Preparations are now underway in the UN corridors for a fierce diplomatic battle when the Security Council meets in mid-March to decide on the sanctions on Iraq. France and Russia are demanding a reduction in the sanctions and are supported in this by several countries, including some Arab ones such as Egypt, Oman, and Jordan. 'Amr Musa expressed this view when he stressed that the sanctions imposed on Iraq are "eternal" and must be reduced. As to Oman, which occupies a Security Council seat, the head of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations took care to visit it to convince it to change its stance. As for Kuwait, it adopted a bizarre stance when its foreign minister declared that Kuwait is not a major country to decide on the fate of sanctions, even though Kuwait is the primary cause of the problem and is the cause for stalling the Arab reconciliation efforts.

But the West's divisions over this question have not prevented most of the Western countries from sending high-level trade and economic delegations to Baghdad. This was not confined to Russia, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Canada, and Spain but Iraqis were amazed to see a large British delegation, including representatives from the largest English companies and banks, arrive in Baghdad. The visit came while Britain was declaring its support for the U.S. stance on lifting the sanctions. This conflicting attitude is a trait of English policy, which finds nothing wrong in supporting the United States on one hand and in concluding trade deals with Iraq on the other and then in criticizing Jordan and Iran for smuggling Iraqi oil deals.

This means that Egypt and the Arab countries that oppose continuation of the sanctions on Iraq have the right to start holding the necessary contacts to restore normal economic relations with Iraq, whose people are going through a crushing crisis as a result of the unfair blockade imposed on it. Most of the European countries have violated the sanctions imposed on the Serbs and the United States is now bargaining over these resolutions. So where is the problem?

MB Spokesman Says Government Holding 65 Members

NC0903201295 Paris AFP in English 1450 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 9 (AFP)—Egyptian authorities are holding at least 65 members of the Moslem Brotherhood [MB] in detention, a spokesman for the banned fundamentalist movement told AFP on Thursday [9 March].

Ma'mun al-Hudaybi said the Moslem Brotherhood "expects the authorities will step up their measures against the movement as we approach elections to the legislature and professional unions" to be held this fall.

Al-Hudaybi said 25 Moslem Brothers were arrested for distributing Brotherhood literature last Thursday during celebrations for the end of the Ramadan fast in al-Minya and Asyut, which lie 252 kilometers (156 miles) and 386 kilometers (239 miles) south of Cairo, respectively.

The state prosecutor is still holding 22 other Brotherhood members in detention, while 10 more are being held at security camps in Qina and Aswan further south, al-Hudaybi said.

Eight Moslem Brothers have been held for more than four months in Cairo and Suez, 135 kilometers (83 miles) east of the capital, the spokesman added.

"It is difficult to give a precise number of prisoners because dozens of Moslem Brothers are detained regularly for a few days in police stations and security camps," al-Hudaybi said.

Recent government measures adopted against professional unions controlled by the Moslem Brotherhood were aimed at "muzzling" the organization before legislative elections in October, in which the Brotherhood intends to front candidates, he said.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak accused the Moslem Brotherhood in spring 1994 of being behind fundamentalist violence in Egypt. Since then, security authorities have increased arrests of Moslem Brothers.

Violence between security forces and Islamic militants seeking to overthrow the Mubarak government has claimed more than 672 lives since March 1992.

Created in 1929, the Moslem Brotherhood was banned in 1954 by the then Egyptian president Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. But the governments of the late president Anwar al-Sadat and his successor Mubarak have tolerated its activities since 1976.

The organization calls for implementation of Islamic Shari'ah law but officially rejects the use of violence.

Sudan

DUP Criticizes Asmara Accord, al-Mahdi

95AA0104B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Feb 95 p 5

[Report on interview with al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin al-Hindi, secretary general of DUP, by Ali Qasim Ballut; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin al-Hindi, secretary general of the Sudanese Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] expects the Asmara agreement to fail, because "it does not express the Sudanese people's will."

Al-Hindi, who currently leads a wing opposed to DUP leader Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, said that this agreement, which was signed by the leaders of the Sudanese parties, including al-Mirghani, is doomed to failure. In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, he said that al-Ummah Party leader al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's public reconciliation with the al-Turabi-al-Bashir regime did not surprise him.

He said that this regime would be the last nail in the coffin of coups that have taken place in Sudan. Al-Hindi called on the Sudanese people to take part in next month's elections to "vote for their poverty, nakedness, and sickness."

Al-Hindi praised the historical relations between the Egyptian and Sudanese peoples. He hoped that these relations would move from their sentimental state to a practical and technical state.

He denounced the states that placed Sudan on the terrorism list. He said that the Sudanese people were oppressed, and their government was the one that practices terrorism.

Al-Hindi began his interview by shedding light on what he called the public reconciliation between al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, former Sudanese prime minister and leader of the al-Ummah Party, and Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front. Al-Hindi said: "There is no basic conflict between al-Mahdi's views and religious belief and the present regime, because al-Mahdi is a Muslim, a thinker, and an analyst. No conflict has existed between them, even before the coup. The disagreement between him and al-Turabi is about the running of the government and the skeletons of the administrative systems in it. I personally was not surprised about what happened. However, I thought that al-Mahdi would not reveal his wishes so soon."

Asked how this "interest" will reflect on the Sudanese opposition, al-Hindi said that al-Mahdi was in the opposition in name. We hoped that he would be a strong support for it, in view of his representational importance as the leader of the influential al-Ansar group. His opposition to the al-Turabi-al-Bashir regime was not equal to his representational importance. Al-Mahdi was trying to narrow the differences between him and the regime. I think that the al-Ansar group will not accept his actions, and he will face opposition.

Asked what his reasons were for keeping away from the political stage and then suddenly reappearing on it, al-Hindi said: When the political stage becomes insignificant, the voice of rumors becomes loud, and political hypocrisy becomes a flourishing commodity at the end of the 20th century, it is better for those who are supposed to be different to maintain their dignity and keep silent. However, when rumors and allegations touch an important decision like the Asmara accord, one cannot remain silent. We must refute and underline the weaknesses and faults and find solutions. The people who signed the Asmara accord have no right to implement it and to go ahead with it, because it will hurt Sudan.

Regarding his evaluation of the Asmara accord, al-Hindi said that this was just another attempt by opposition parties to strike a deal with John Garang's forces to get into the spotlight. This is the ninth accord with the same entity.

Regarding al-Mirghani's signing of the accord, al-Hindi said: "Al-Mirghani is an honorary chairman of the DUP. He has no executive authority. He has no authority either from the people or from the party to sign the Asmara accord. Even the nonhonorary chairmen of other parties, who signed the accord, have not been authorized by their people to do so. What they did was to strip the people of their valor and struggle. The people do not accept the existence of a federation or a confederation."

Regarding the impact of al-Mirghani's signing of the Asmara accord on the DUP, al-Hindi said: "Party members are sentimentally attached to the party, and such action could affect them. They are hurt, because part of their country is being given away to another party. However, the DUP cadres fully realize that this step will not take place."

Regarding Sudan's independence, which was celebrated last January, al-Hindi said: Independence in the true sense of the word has not existed for the past 25 years. We mark this occasion to remember the martyrs who gave their lives for the sake of independence.

Asked why Sudan is a suitable ground for coupists, al-Hindi said: "Look for the foreign fingers. Sudan is a big and formidable country. It is a promising country that occupies an important place in the heart of Africa. It is surrounded by many states. Many parties have political and economic ambitions in Sudan. If we examine the coups that have taken place in it, we will find that foreign, and not local, forces were behind them. The question is why does any coup succeed in Sudan? The answer is that the Sudanese citizen is not treacherous by nature. He is known for his spontaneity and frankness. He does not suspect treachery and treason so he can fortify himself and take that into consideration. The regimes that toyed with Sudan's independence have promoted all these bad habits."

Regarding Sudanese-Egyptian relations, al-Hindi said that the relations had proved their sentimental strength over the years. However, they have not developed scientifically and technically. These relations remained embodied in an adoring slogan repeated by the people in Egypt and Sudan. No attempt has been made to study these relations and strengthen them economically and socially.

Answering a question about his expectations for Sudan's future, al-Hindi said: We think that the al-Turabi-al-Bashir coup is the last lesson a Sudanese citizen will receive and the end of all coups, because the Sudanese citizen has reached the age of maturity. He now understands all the deceiving slogans raised by the phony left, right, and center parties in the past. In Sudan there are a phony center and phony leaders.

Regarding the future scenarios, al-Hindi said: There are several scenarios arranged by several parties joined by a common objective. They are in the process of devising a unified coordinated plan to ensure that their country regains its lost freedom, development, progress, and democracy.

Asked about next month's elections in Sudan, al-Hindi said: It is a secret signal that the regime is not stable anymore. It is offering elections as compensation. This is tantamount to a bribe to the weak ones. This method was used several times following the three previous military coups. Participation in the government or expanding the participation base appeals to weak people, who want to secure two positions: their position in the opposition and their position in the government. Our DUP will not take part in these phony elections. We do not encourage anyone to take part in them, because the regime has taken exclusive control of security, economy, and the junior and senior posts. Whoever wants to participate, he will be voting for his hunger, sickness, nakedness, and deprivation.

Regarding the classification of Sudan as one of the terrorist countries in the world, al-Hindi said: Officials in the world and even human rights organizations always make a mistake in this respect. The Sudanese people themselves are facing terrorism at the hands of their government. It would be preferable for them to say that the Sudanese Government exercised terrorism and that people in the north and south were starving. Therefore, we appeal to the countries contributing to human welfare to learn the facts about what is happening in Sudan. Attaching such a stigma to Sudan reflects on its people, and wherever they go in the world it will continue to taint them for many years.

Talks Claimed Between Regime, Opposition Party

95AA0104D London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Feb 95 p 5

[Report by Kamal Hamid in Khartoum]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudanese Parliamentary Speaker Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah has initiated government contacts with regional opposition parties in southern and western Sudan. This was part of a broader activity during which he has so far held talks with former Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and officials of the opposition Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] to achieve national reconciliation.

Informed sources told AL-HAYAH that a government delegation met with a delegation of southern leaders the day before yesterday. The government delegation included Khalifah and parliamentary members Dr. Ahmad Ibrahim al—Turabi and Ahmad Haybah. The delegation of southern leaders included Samuel Aru, former deputy prime minister and leader of the Southern Sudan Political Coalition Party; former Minister Joshua Di Wal [name as transliterated]; and Major General Peter Sirilyu, former member of the transitional military council.

The two delegations discussed the government's future and the possibility of including southern opposition forces in it. AL-HAYAH has learned that Khalifah briefed the southern leaders on his negotiations with the northern forces (the al-Ummah and the DUP parties).

Joshua Di Wal said that the southern forces that took part in the meeting "demanded a national solution to Sudan's problems. We told them that we will not participate in a government that does not represent all the people."

The new Education Minister Dr. Kabashor Kuku met with father Philip 'Abbas Ghabbush, leader of the al-Nubah mountain province, and Hamad Kuku, leader of the Sudanese National Party within the framework of the government's efforts to achieve reconciliation. The discussion dealt with the participation of Ghabbush in the peace process in Sudan. AL-HAYAH has learned that Ghabbush demanded that the government lift the ban on him so he could travel abroad for treatment.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Government newspaper AL-INQADH AL-WATANI has reported that Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the ruling National Islamic Front, has described the Arab states' normalization of their relations with Israel as "treason and weakness." He said that Sudan was not afraid of isolation and of being described as a terrorist state. Speaking at a meeting organized by the student union at Khartoum University, al-Turabi said that the Arab states' rush to normalize their relations with Israel is tantamount to treason and weakness.

The independent newspaper AKHBAR AL-YAWM cited al-Turabi as saying to the Khartoum University students that Sudan was not afraid of isolation, because God is with it, and was not afraid to be placed on the terrorist list, because this is an honorable list. The United States placed Sudan on the list of states that sponsor state terrorism in 1993. Sudan denied the charge, stressing that the United States simply objects to its Islamic orientation.

Al-Bashir Hails Start of Election Process

EA0803190595 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad Al-Bashir, has issued a statement to the Sudanese nation on the occasion of the beginning of the election process in the country. He announced that a new phase had begun in the building of the political system by holding elections at the conference [mu'tamarat] level and the beginning of elections in geographical constituencies [as heard]. He affirmed the government's determination to base the political experiment on the best religious and social values, and to make public duty a form of worship aimed at seeking God's favor. [passage omitted]

His excellency declared it was well known that the entire Sudanese political experiment was characterized by cooperation, consultation and [word indistinct]. His excellency called on media, academic and specialized political institutions to study the election and the political experiment in Sudan. He affirmed that Sudan's door was open to all.

He again called on media, political, executive and legislative organs to inform the citizens of their responsibilities and their rights and [word indistinct] to ensure the integrity and fairness of the elections. He pointed out that the electoral commission and those organs assisting it would put in place the necessary conditions to ensure that the elections were free and reflected the wishes of the people.

Tunisia

Portuguese President Arrives on State Visit

Meets With President Ben Ali

LD0703222695 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali this afternoon had talks in Carthage palace with President Mario Soares of Portugal who is on a state visit to Tunisia at the invitation of Ben Ali. The talks covered a range of issues and matters of common interest at the bilateral, regional, and international levels. In this context, the official spokesman for the presidency of the republic said that the two presidents had had a general review of the relations, friendship, and cooperation between Tunisia and Portugal, and the scope of strengthening them in light of the continuous meetings between the two countries, particularly the meeting of the joint cooperation committee which will be convened next April. In this context, the two presidents stressed the importance they attached to further promoting bilateral relations, and they recorded with satisfaction the similarity of the orientation of the two countries' policies, particularly the adopting of the principle of cooperation and consideration to interests in resolving problems, as well as sticking to the values of peace and democracy, and protecting the rights and dignity of man.

The official spokesman added that President Ben Ali, the current chairman of the OAU, discussed with President Soares the problems of the African continent, and they expressed the hope that efforts would be pooled at regional and international level to resolve crises in Africa, particularly in Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, and Mozambique, in order to bring about peace and security in these friendly African countries.

At the regional level, the two presidents underlined the importance of cooperation between the countries of the western Mediterranean basin in particular, and Maghreban-European cooperation in general, to meet the challenges imposed by the changes and developments at regional and international levels, and to secure the better factors of stability and cooperation for all sides. The two sides also had a general review of international issues, including the problem of the Middle East, the peace process, and particularly the Palestinian question and the international support it now requires so as to ensure the success of the search for an overall and just peace in the region. They also reviewed the problems of Bosnia and Chechnya, together with cooperation between the advanced and developing countries. [passage omitted]

Soares Pledges More Maghreb-EU Cooperation

BR0903144095 Lisbon DIARIO DE NOTICIAS in Portuguese 8 Mar 95 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Soares Promises Greater Maghreb-EU Cooperation in Tunisia"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mario Soares pledged in Tunis, Tunisia, yesterday to exert himself "thoroughly" to ensure that the talks between that country and the European Union (EU) "are concluded this year with a cooperation and partnership agreement advantageous for both sides." The president of the republic was talking about the possible creation of a European-Maghreb partnership area, proposed by several southern EU countries, including Portugal.

He also referred to the "Portuguese initiative of promoting the dialogue" between the Western European Union (WEU) and the Maghreb countries and Egypt, "contributing to the strengthening of security in the Mediterranean," while Portugal holds the organization's presidency.

In a speech in which he praised the long-standing relations of friendship and cooperation between "the two peoples and states," Soares emphasized "the role which Tunisia has played since its independence as a meeting place for people of many horizons and merits and a land of solidarity and refuge for those who have availed themselves of its acknowledged hospitality in various circumstances." [passage omitted]

However, he noted that "Tunisia is very important for Portugal, with considerable Portuguese investments in the country and a very favorable balance of trade," and so the visit loses none of its importance.

In connection with the OAU presidency, which Tunisia recently took over, Soares recalled "the grave conflicts which have been besetting the continent of Africa," highlighting the reconciliation processes under way in Angola and Mozambique. He also drew Ben Ali's attention to the "worrying situation in East Timor." [passage omitted]

Visit Ends; Relations Said 'Excellent'

LD0803224195 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Portuguese President Mario Soares left Tunisia this evening at the end of a state visit to our country at the invitation of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The head of state and his wife, Mrs. Leila Ben Ali, were at Carthage-Tunis International Airport to see the Portuguese president and his wife off.

At a news conference held at Essaada Palace in El Marsa this afternoon at the end of his state visit, President Soares said that Tunisia, which enjoys stability and a noticeable economic development, occupies an excellent position and is an extremely important partner for Portugal. He added: In this respect, we have agreed to expand the scope of our bilateral cooperation, not only at the political level, but also at the economic and cultural levels.

After expressing his sincere gratitude to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali for inviting him to visit Tunisia, which is the first visit by a Portuguese head of state, President Mario Soares described the Tunisian-Portuguese relations as excellent. He added that these relations were greatly boosted since President Ben Ali's state visit to Portugal in 1993 which was a total success.

President Mario Soares also said that his visit to Tunisia was aimed at bolstering relations between the two countries, particularly by promoting Portuguese investments in Tunisia, setting up joint ventures between Tunisian and Portuguese businessmen and developing tourism between the two countries and also through cooperation between the two parliaments.

Kuwait

Coast Guard Patrol Fires on 2 'Infiltrators'

LD1003111595 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1003 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait City, 10 Mar, KUNA—Coast guard patrols yesterday foiled an attempt by two people to infiltrate Kuwait's northern territorial waters in a boat after they opened fire on them, wounding one of them and arresting the other [words indistinct].

An official source at the Interior Ministry's public relations department told KUNA today that "coast guard patrols foiled the attempt to infiltrate the country by stealth during routine patrols aimed at protecting the northern territorial waters. The patrols fired warning shots, and after the boat failed to stop, they opened fire again and wounded one of the two infiltrators, who was then taken to hospital for treatment. The other infiltrator was arrested."

The source said that the two people had been referred to the relevant security departments. The source added that "in the framework of public collaboration with the security services, a number of citizens informed the security authorities about the presence of four infiltrators, who were arrested yesterday and later referred to the relevant security departments."

Assembly Speaker Meets Russian Duma Delegation

LD0803214895 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2015 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 8 Mar (KUNA)—Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sa'dun today met a Russian State Duma delegation led by Ramil Mirsayev.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review relations between the two countries' parliament and ways of bolstering them, in addition to the role which Russia could play in applying pressure on Iraq to release Kuwaiti prisoners and hostages, and to comply with international resolutions relating to the war for the liberation of Kuwait.

The Russian delegation arrived night on a several-day official visit, which falls within the framework of consolidating relations between the Kuwaiti National Assembly and Russian Duma. [passage omitted]

*Interview With Heir Apparent on Wide-Ranging Issues

95LH0081A Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 17 Jan 95 pp 16-17

[Interview with Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister, by Jasim al-Mutawwi' and Muhammad Abd-al-Qadir al-Jasim; place and date not given—first 10 paragraphs are AL-WATAN introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister, has ruled out the possibility that the disease of religious extremism will spread to Kuwait. He denied, in this respect, that the recent government measures were designed to "clip the Islamists' fingernails," emphasizing that they are "our brothers and cousins."

In an interview with AL-WATAN, His Highness Shaykh Sa'd added: We will not keep silent about any behavior if we think it is going to affect the unity of the domestic front.

His highness the heir apparent emphasized the freedom of decisionmaking in Kuwait. He said: We are free to adopt any domestic or foreign policy. I say it loudly: If you have heard that the government is carrying out foreign-dictated policies, I say to you that such a claim is rejected.

Regarding the possibility of allowing the establishment of political parties in Kuwait, Shaykh Sa'd said that this is premature now. When the people of Kuwait become convinced that the establishment of parties is in the interest of Kuwait and will not divide them or destroy our national unity, then we can consider this sensitive issue.

His highness the heir apparent devoted part of his interview with AL-WATAN to the economic situation in the country. He said: Yes, we have a financial deficit, but, God willing, it will not continue. He stressed the need to find additional sources of income. His highness reassured the people with limited income, saying: When we discuss levies, we always take the situation of these brothers into consideration. The question is not whether the government should profit. We want to rationalize the use of services. The government will soon have a complete plan in this regard. We will make no decision unless there is complete conviction. He said: We do not have a tendency for domination and unilateral decisionmaking.

His highness talked about the need to amend some articles of law No. 41/1993 on unresolved debts, emphasizing that the government is preparing such an amendment and will send it to the National Assembly.

Discussing the relations with the Iraqi regime, his highness the heir apparent said: When we say that we have learned the lesson, we must apply what we have learned. His highness stressed the need for Baghdad to abide by all the UN Security Council resolutions, foremost the release of our prisoners and hostages.

His highness ruled out the possibility of restoring relations with Iraq. He said that those who supported Iraq have not yet taken an honorable stand. They are obstinate and have not seriously dealt with this matter, he said.

Shaykh Sa'd affirmed that the relations that bind Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are more than a confederation. He noted, in this regard, the honorable position that Saudi Arabia has adopted in support of Kuwait. His highness also noted the strength of Kuwaiti-American relations, saying: We are seeking to strengthen them further.

Answering a question about the National Assembly and the gaps in the democratic process, his highness said: You are aware of what the people are saying in Kuwait, and you have been following the debates in the National Assembly. You can make your own evaluation. Everyone knows that I welcome any debate designed to promote Kuwait's supreme interest.

[AL-WATAN] Much is being said about Kuwait's financial situation. We have read reports about an expected unpleasant situation, an increase in the financial deficit, and the need to impose taxes on income and services. Will your highness clarify the facts?

[Al-Sabah] Yes, we have a financial deficit, as the figures show. However, God willing, this deficit will not continue. Sooner or later, we must find alternative sources of income.

We appreciate the people's needs in all fields. However, when we talk about levies, I do not want the people to think that these levies will impose a big burden on low income families. We will take the situation of these brothers into consideration. The question is not whether the government makes a profit. We want to rationalize the use of services. There are wastefulness and extravagance. We also must rationalize expenditures. We must not only think about the present, but consider the future of our generations. I want to emphasize that specialized committees are studying all these issues, and they will then submit a report to the Council of Ministers. Then it will either issue a decision or a decree on the matter or send a bill to the National Assembly to make it into a law. We will not make a decision unless we are convinced that it is in Kuwait's interest. We do not have a tendency for domination and unilateral decisionmaking. We always think about the present and future situation of the brother citizens with limited income. As I said, we will take their situation into consideration.

[AL-WATAN] What is the proposed tax formula?

[Al-Sabah] It is now too early to talk about a formula. The government will soon have a complete picture about the levies and the segments of people who will be exempted.

[AL-WATAN] Your Highness, in the light of the fast-moving international developments, how do you view Kuwait's situation and future? How can we remove the anxiety that has gripped the people following the treacherous disaster aggression?

[Al-Sabah] Kuwait, thank God, is well, and will remain well, by the will of God and its people's determination and unity and the justness of our cause. With the help of God and the support of the brothers, friends, and the international community, our dear country was liberated and the occupying Iraqi forces were driven out. Therefore, we must thank the Almighty God. We must also believe that our strength lies in our cooperation, unity, and mutual understanding. Differences of opinion, now or in the future, must not be allowed to affect the unity and solidity of the domestic front. It is true that Iraq has recently come to grips with the reality and recognized Kuwait as an independent state, according to UN Security Council Resolution 833 and the other pertinent resolutions. However, does the recognition resolve everything? Of course, not. Iraq must implement all the Security Council resolutions. What is most important, it must release our prisoners and hostages still being held in Iraqi prisons.

I would like to add that the anxiety you are talking about is a relative matter. It differs from one person to the other. It is a natural feeling following the treacherous Iraqi aggression and the barbaric actions against our people, including the torture and rape, and the continued absence of our prisoners and hostages. I am confident that our people, who have offered magnificent examples in steadfastness, sacrifice, and resisting the invaders and who have made recognized achievements in development and reconstruction, are able, with God's help, to overcome this transient feeling of anxiety and continue their march with confidence and reassurance. When we say that we have learned the lesson, we must apply what we have learned.

[AL-WATAN] Your highness has always devoted attention to national unity. In your opinion, what are the things that destroy this unity and that we must avoid?

[Al-Sabah] I have always said that our national unity is the basis of our strength with which we have faced the enemy. It is also the basis of our credibility and worthiness in the eyes of our friends and allies. Becoming preoccupied with differences and issues that do not serve the public interest is illogical and unacceptable when the enemy's danger and threat are still evident. This can only weaken our domestic front. Let us go on the same path under the leadership of his highness the amir of Kuwait, may God protect him, the path of good that will ensure greater security, stability, strength, and impregnability.

[AL-WATAN] Some people have called for permission to establish political parties in Kuwait. What is your highness's view on this issue?

[Al-Sabah] Talking about the establishment of political parties now is premature. When the people of Kuwait become convinced that the establishment of parties is in the interest of Kuwait and will not divide them or destroy our national unity, then it will be possible to consider this sensitive issue.

[AL-WATAN] During your meeting with the national societies, associations, and unions, you proposed the establishment of a popular committee for consultation. What happened regarding this proposal?

[Al-Sabah] After my return from abroad, I invited the heads of public service societies and raised the idea with them. The meeting was fruitful, positive, and constructive. The genuine Kuwaiti spirit was manifested in this meeting. We agreed to establish a committee under the chairmanship of the minister of social affairs and labor. I left the matter to the brothers to choose the committee members. We hope that the committee will accomplish its task quickly so that we can act on its recommendations.

On this occasion, I would like again to applaud the magnificent role played by our young people during the hated occupation. They shouldered their responsibility well. We must all nurture this good spirit. All the people—young and old, and whatever the nature of their work may be—have a responsibility toward their country. We also must educate our children to shoulder the responsibility.

[AL-WATAN] In 1976 and 1986, the Kuwaiti political leadership thought that there were complaints and gaps in the democratic process, and that there was a need to review some articles of the Constitution to ensure a constructive and not a destructive democracy. The National Assembly is now exercising its jurisdiction under the Constitution. Why is nothing being said now about the negative aspects? Are there any obstacles preventing agreement with the National Assembly to discuss the negative aspects of the democratic process?

[Al-Sabah] You are aware of what is being said in Kuwait, and you have been following the debates in the National Assembly. You can make your own evaluation. Everyone knows that I welcome any debate or a meeting that will promote Kuwait's supreme interest.

[AL-WATAN] Are you pessimistic?

[Al-Sabah] Occasionally I do not feel happy about some practices and actions. Yet, I am not pessimistic. I still firmly believe that we must agree on a common view of our priorities.

[AL-WATAN] Regarding the Islamic trends and movements in Kuwait, what is your highness's view of these trends? Is there a possibility that the disease of extremism will infect Kuwait?

[Al-Sabah] We must consider Kuwait's supreme interests always. Everything within reason is acceptable. However, if we see that some actions have begun to exceed the limit and go beyond reason, we will then have something to say.

[AL-WATAN] Your Highness, is there a possibility that the disease of extremism will spread to Kuwait?

[Al-Sabah] I do not think so. We will not keep silent about any behavior if we think it is going to affect the unity of the domestic front.

[AL-WATAN] Some people are accusing the government of adopting measures to clip the Islamists' fingernails in Kuwait. What is your opinion?

[Al-Sabah] By God, no. It is not a question of the government clipping fingernails. They are our brothers and cousins. As I have said, we are always concerned about the supreme national interest. Any activity within this framework will be acceptable.

[AL-WATAN] Some people claim that you are receiving instructions from outside in this regard.

[Al-Sabah] We are free to adopt any domestic or foreign policy. I say it loudly: If you have heard that the government, in this regard, is implementing foreign-dictated policies, I say to you, as the prime minister, that this is untrue. It is an illogical and rejected claim.

[AL-WATAN] Since assuming your responsibility, your highness has attached top priority to the security issue. What has been accomplished? How can we accomplish what has not been accomplished yet? How important is the media's security role?

[Al-Sabah] We thank God for the security and stability enjoyed by our country. We are always trying to strengthen security, which is the basis of everything. As you know, carrying out plans, programs, and public and private projects is not possible unless we have security and stability. The media plays an important role in this regard.

[AL-WATAN] Do you support freedom, and to what extent?

[Al-Sabah] I support maximum freedom as long as it serves Kuwait's interests. Some people say that freedom without controls turns into anarchy. Some people also say that freedom is like a double-edged sword. If you do not use it properly, it will cut you.

[AL-WATAN] Are you satisfied with the media and democratic freedoms that exist now?

[Al-Sabah] Yes. I am generally satisfied. Some violations exist, and we must try to end them, because they negatively affect the domestic front and our foreign relations. You, as media men, have a role to play in this regard.

[AL-WATAN] What is your evaluation of your ministers following the recent cabinet reshuffle? Are you satisfied with the performance of the Council of Ministers?

[Al-Sabah] All the brother ministers are putting much effort into their work. All are diligent and work for the good of the country.

[AL-WATAN] How do you assess the government's efforts on privatization?

[Al-Sabah] I know that many people are asking about the government's role on privatization, and why no bolder and more positive measures have been taken. The second deputy prime minister and minister of finance can answer this question in more details. However, I think, we are moving on the right path. The people are wondering why the government is not moving fast on this issue. We say to them that this is an economic and commercial issue. If I went to a minister and told him: You are not moving fast; you must put everything you have on the market or on the stock exchange. The result would be turmoil, because there is a limit to what the market can take. We cannot achieve our desired goal in this way. The market depends on supply and demand. This means that the process should take place slowly and gradually.

[AL-WATAN] Do you support privatization?

[Al-Sabah] Yes, I support privatization. We want the private sector to play a bigger role in stimulating economic activity.

[AL-WATAN] What is new regarding the debts' issue?

[Al-Sabah] We are in the process of amending some articles of law No. 41/1993 on debts. Experience has shown that they must be amended. We are preparing this draft amendment and will refer it to the National Assembly. The purpose of the proposed amendment is not to rescue the debtors, but to stimulate economic activity and tackle the economic situation, in general.

[AL-WATAN] There are reports that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will establish a confederation between them. What is the truth about these reports? Does the existing cooperation between the two countries require such a system?

[Al-Sabah] The historic relations, cooperation, cohesion, and understanding that exist between us and our brothers in Saudi Arabia are more than a confederation or any other system. We will never forget the historic and honorable position of the servant of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and the government and people of the fraternal Saudi Arabian Kingdom during the treacherous Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Undoubtedly, we aspire for more cooperation, cohesion, and consultation with our brothers in Saudi Arabia and our brothers in the other Gulf states in all fields, so that anyone harboring any designs against us will understand that none of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states will be alone. We are a group of states that believe in the unity of objective and common fate.

[AL-WATAN] The message his highness the amir sent to the leaders of the GCC states had a good effect. It was completely frank. Will we see any translation of this message into practice soon?

[Al-Sabah] The message his highness sent to the GCC leaders came at the appropriate time. His highness was very candid and sincere in his message, clarifying the dangers facing all the GCC states, and not only Kuwait. The report prepared by the servant of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd, was similarly important. God willing, from now until the next conference, we will try to work out the suitable formula to promote the existing cooperation, not only in the political and economic fields, but also in all other fields, including security and military.

[AL-WATAN] What is Kuwait's position on the Middle East peace process?

[Al-Sabah] Our policy on the peace process is clear to all the countries of the world. We support a just and comprehensive peace within the framework of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the other resolutions concerning the Middle East problem.

[AL-WATAN] Some questions have been raised about Kuwait's relations with the Iraqi regime if it implements all the resolutions.

[Al-Sabah] Regarding the Iraqi regime, we emphasize that we have learned the lesson. Who carried out the aggression? The ruling regime in Iraq did. Who killed many of our sons and raped our daughters? The Iraqi regime did. Who is still holding our prisoners? The Iraqi regime is. It still harbors many hostile intentions. This, however, does not mean that we are against the Iraqi people. Reports that America, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are behind the blockade and the starvation of the Iraqi people are untrue. An UN Security Council resolution allows Iraq to sell oil for $1.6 billion to buy food, medicine, and everything that it needs. Yet, the Iraqi regime does not want to do that. It has been seeking to lift the blockade and get permission to export a larger quantity of oil not to buy food for the Iraqi people, but to buy weapons and military equipment to resume its hostile activity. Our brothers in the Gulf, undoubtedly, are aware that the Iraqi regime has expansionist and hostile intentions, and Kuwait is not the only target.

[AL-WATAN] Does this mean that Kuwait has no intention of restoring any sort of relations with Iraqi under the present regime, even if it implements all the Security Council resolutions?

[Al-Sabah] If you pose this question to anyone on the street, he will be shocked.

[AL-WATAN] A Palestinian official source has recently said that the PLO recognizes Kuwait's international borders as defined by the UN special committee. Does this suggest an improvement in the relations with the PLO leadership?

[Al-Sabah] Forget about the Palestinian acceptance. They have complied with the Security Council resolution. But tell me, has any Palestinian official called on the Iraqi regime to implement the Security Council resolutions and speed up the release of Kuwaiti prisoners and hostages? Have you heard anything like this from them or from the states that supported the Iraqi aggression? They are obstinate and have not shown any seriousness in dealing with this matter.

[AL-WATAN] Does this mean that you see no change in their positions?

[Al-Sabah] We do not want statements made behind closed doors. We want the Kuwaiti people, who have offered much support and assistance to them, to hear what they say. Admitting your mistake is a virtue.

[AL-WATAN] Have you discussed the current Arab situation with the Arab League secretary general during his recent visit to Kuwait?

[Al-Sabah] We discussed the current Arab situation and the deterioration in Arab relations caused by the treacherous Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. The Iraqi regime has caused the current division in the Arab world, and it shoulders the historic responsibility for it.

[AL-WATAN] What is the nature of the American-Kuwaiti relations? What are the issues you are working on to strengthen these relations to serve the mutual interests of the two countries?

[Al-Sabah] The Kuwaiti-American relations are strong. We are working to strengthen them further and to continue the cooperation between the two countries on all levels and in all fields. When the Iraqi regime concentrated its forces on the border last October, our American friends extended quick and effective support to us. The UN Security Council subsequently issued Resolution 949 prohibiting Iraq from reinforcing its forces in the southern region.

We are completely satisfied with our relations with the United States. We are seeking to strengthen these relations further in all fields. We are also seeking to develop our relations with all the other fraternal and friendly states that supported us to liberate Kuwait.

[AL-WATAN] At first, there was an idea of collecting a levy for the war effort. This was later made voluntary. How do you evaluate this kind of work?

[Al-Sabah] There was an idea of collecting a levy by the force of law for the war effort. However, we decided that this must be voluntary. It reflects the people's patriotism. What is the use of money without a homeland? I am optimistic that contribution to the war effort will continue.

[AL-WATAN] The nature and structure of Kuwaiti society have changed. Does this change affect the appointment of government officials?

[Al-Sabah] Some people might think that the government selects officials from a certain group of people. This is incorrect. Appointments are based on qualification and ability to shoulder the responsibility. What is being said in this regard is far from the truth.

[AL-WATAN] As a citizen, how do you spend your day?

[Al-Sabah] I begin the day early by reading the newspapers and listening to newscasts. If we do not have a Council of Ministers's meeting, or any other higher council meeting that day, I go to my office to run the day-to-day affairs and to hold official meetings until the end of the day. After that, at home, I continue to read reports that I receive and follow up other state and public affairs until a late hour of the night. I also have time for social visits, private reading, and relaxation.

[AL-WATAN] What about the family?

[Al-Sabah] I meet with my family members, especially at the weekend. They understand the nature of my work and responsibilities. I always guide them. I sit with my children and discuss their affairs and concerns.

[AL-WATAN] Doesn't your busy schedule exhausts those who work with you?

[Al-Sabah] I appreciate the tiring schedule they keep in working with me. They have adapted to my work schedule.

[AL-WATAN] What do you read?

[Al-Sabah] I read any book, particularly on politics and history, that I find.

[AL-WATAN] Why do people love Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah?

[Al-Sabah] May God reward them. I am here to serve them. We ask the Almighty God to help us serve them and grant us success in doing what is acceptable to Him.

[AL-WATAN] What about the citizens' complaints?

[Al-Sabah] I have set aside one day in the week for this matter. I welcome any citizen who has a problem and thinks that I can solve it. However, no one should think that I can violate existing laws and regulations to solve their problems.

[AL-WATAN] Do you think that this is a sound method to deal with problems?

[Al-Sabah] I cannot close my doors to any citizen. Meeting with citizens, listening to their complaints, and trying to solve them is a tradition we inherited from our fathers and forefathers.

[AL-WATAN] What is the role of officials?

[Al-Sabah] Every official carries out his duty. They have a role, but this does not prevent me and my brother ministers from setting aside a day in the week to meet with the citizens and to listen to their complaints.

[AL-WATAN] What is your highness's opinion about the local press?

[Al-Sabah] I discussed the press issue in my speech last April. With all due respect to our press, regrettably, newspapers occasionally publish articles and commentaries that do not take Kuwait's interest, now or in the future, into consideration. They contradict our values, morals, and traditions. Our society is conservative. The newspapers enter our homes. We are also passing through delicate circumstances. Kuwait is being targeted, and the enemy still has designs against us, waiting for the chance to penetrate our domestic front. Iraq's recognition of Kuwait does not end everything. The ruling regime in Iraq still has hostile intentions.

[AL-WATAN] Are you satisfied with the official media?

[Al-Sabah] We are trying to develop our media to satisfy the tastes of people. We monitor what is being broadcast to make sure it benefits the viewers and listeners.

[AL-WATAN] We thank your highness very much for this opportunity and for the precious time you gave us. We also thank you for your complete frankness, to which we have become accustomed.

[Al-Sabah] You are always welcome. We are all brothers in the same boat.

Yemen

Defense Minister Declares Merger of Armed Forces

JN0903163395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Iqbal 'Abdallah in Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Malik al-Sayyani has declared that the units of the Yemeni Armed Forces have been merged. Thus, he indicated that one of the thorniest problems facing Yemen since the inception of unity has been resolved. The failure to merge the northern and southern Armed Forces was one of the causes of the recent war in Yemen.

In a speech before a group of soldiers and officers delivered on 5 March, al-Sayyani added: The merger of all Armed Forces and security units has been successfully completed. These units have been reorganized on firm national bases. They will remain the protective shield safeguarding unity and the country's sovereignty.

The Yemeni defense minister described the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in holy Mecca on 27 Ramadan as a significant historic event and a pan-Arab gain. This accomplishment, he added, reflects the triumph of common sense and logic. This development, he noted, will create the best climates for fostering fraternal agreement and enhancing ties between the two fraternal countries of Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

The Yemeni defense minister said: The Yemeni people, who have been hardened by experiences and ordeals and held out in the face of all plots and challenges, are proud that their Armed Forces personnel are now standing in one trench to defend the homeland and its unity, which took root and became irreversible when victory was declared over the secessionist leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party on 7 July. The phase through which the Yemeni homeland is currently passing requires all Armed Forces personnel to demonstrate awareness, care, and vigilance, and to guard against all the conspiracies hatched by the enemies of the Yemeni people at home and abroad, particularly since the Armed Forces and security organs have been successfully merged and reorganized on firm national bases, and their preparedness has been maintained.

Military Developments in North, South Reported

U.S., Jordanian Sources Cited on Situation

JN0903152095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Rafiq Khalil al-Ma'luf in Washington, Raghidah Dirgham in New York, Zuhayr Qusayybati in London, and Salamah Ni'mat in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A U.S. official announced yesterday that "something" is going on in Iraq, adding that a military mobilization has been noticed there. He noted that there are numerous "projections" on what is taking place there, including a coup attempt, adding that Washington is closely monitoring the situation in Iraq. Meanwhile, a high-ranking source in the Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] told AL-HAYAH that the governorate of al-Kut is witnessing armed clashes and that the situation in Baghdad is on the threshold of explosion. The source said that confrontations with the Iraqi Army are continuing in the North. A UN source in Baghdad, however, denied any military buildup near the Kurdish areas.

Reliable Jordanian sources believe that the Iraqi Army is capable of containing the opposition and striking at them in the North and South. These sources described security disturbances in Baghdad as "individual attacks." [passage omitted]

In Amman, reliable Jordanian sources expressed their belief that the regular Iraqi forces are capable of containing the Iraqi opposition forces, striking at them in the southern and northern parts of the country, and of restoring control over the situation there. The sources added that the available information "indicates that the Iraqi Army still possesses the power to abort any military attempt on the level we are hearing about now."

The sources told AL-HAYAH that nothing indicates that the recent military violations are coordinated or that the Iraqi opposition forces can carry out a large-scale operation that could threatens the central regime. The sources added that the security disturbances in Baghdad are represented by individual attacks that are not carried out by any specific organization and that these disturbances are not connected with each other.

Travelers who arrived in Amman from Baghdad yesterday said that they did not notice anything that would indicate a "coup attempt." However, they confirmed the existence of extraordinary military movements northward and southward. A traveler said that traffic to and from Baghdad continued normally despite the reports about battles in the north. He added that the Iraqis have become accustomed to hearing radio reports about coup attempts and disturbances since the end of the war. However, he said, the Iraqis no longer believe such reports.

Informed sources had confirmed to AL-HAYAH the occurrence of security disturbances in Baghdad and the tightening of security measures there after the occurrence of different incidents which reflected "insecurity and a recession in the authority's prestige."

Meanwhile, a ranking source at the UINC, which opposes President Saddam Husayn's regime, stressed that "Republican Guard forces took control of all sensitive positions and road junctions in Mosul, where the secret service and Ba'th Party agencies were mobilized. The authorities also distributed weapons in anticipation of an uprising. The authorities tried, but in vein, to convince the Shammar tribe to cooperate with them."

The source added that the situation in Baghdad is extremely tense and that all security forces have been put on alert. The source said that the situation in the Iraqi capital "heralds an explosion." He referred to armed confrontations with the security and intelligence agencies in al-Kut Governorate, 200 km south of Baghdad. The source said that the situation in al-Basrah is strained and that fighting is continuing in the al-Qurnah area, southern Iraq, between Army units and the opposition.

The source added that the "Al-Sulaymaniyah-Karkuk sector (in the north) is witnessing large-scale battles between the Army and forces affiliated with the UINC and the Jalal Talabani-led Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The source reported renewed artillery shelling and the Qush Tepa area, 5 km south of the road to Karkuk. Another UINC source referred to "Iraqi shelling of the Kurdish village of Qushtah [name as published] near the Altun Kupri."

Islamic circles in the Iraqi opposition said the Army sent reinforcements to al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, and al-Nasiriyah, "amid fears of a large popular move." The sources also said that Special Forces units supported by armored vehicles were moved to the al- 'Amarah Governorate.

A British Foreign Office spokesman told AL-HAYAH: "We have received contradictory reports on the military situation. Some of these reports talk about Iraqi concentrations. However, the United Nations denies that. We continue to closely watch the situation." [passage omitted]

Kurdish Sources Report on Battles

LD0903141995 Tehran IRNA in English 1409 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kordestan Prov., March 9, IRNA—Helicopters of the Iraqi Army on Wednesday [8 March] shelled Showan, Chamchamal, and Taghtagh [names as received] areas in the northern Iraqi city of Karkuk, Kurdish sources said. The attacks came after a joint attack by the Kurdish groups on Iraqi Army positions in areas north of Karkuk, the sources said adding that they had no information on casualties of the Wednesday shellings.

In another development, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Jalal Talabani said the assault of the Iraqi Army on Kurdish-controlled areas and flight of Iraqi helicopters over the northern part of Karkuk are in violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution No. 688.

Resolution No. 688 prevents Baghdad from attacking Iraqi Kurds in northern part of the country.

Militia of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, along with forces of other Kurdish groups launched series of operations against Iraqi forces deployed in Kara Anjir, Banman, Showan, Gush Tappeh, Kifri and Zangi Abad. [names as received]

Sources close to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said the Kurdish militiamen captured positions of the first commando brigade and the 53rd artillery contingent of the Iraqi Army in Kara Anjir and Banmaghan. Many Iraqi officers and soldiers were killed in the attack, the sources said. Commander of the 53rd artillery contingent Brigadier Majid 'Abd-al-Razagh was among those killed.

The sources said that the Kurdish forces also captured 71 Iraqi soldiers. They also destroyed four tanks, dozens of heavy and light guns and a large amount of ammunition and other military equipment.

PUK Leader Lauds Pehmerga Forces

NC0903160295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1505 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] sent a cable of congratulations to PUK Political Bureau member Lieutenant 'Umar 'Abdallah and a group of PUK forces' field commanders on the resounding victories the heroic Kurdistan peshmerga forces achieved over the remnants of the collapsed 'Aflaqite regime's army that desperately tried to attack areas in the liberated Kurdistan province.

The following is the text of the cable:

Warm greetings of struggle. I congratulate you and your peshmerga on your resounding victory over the Iraqi regime forces' 53d Artillery Battalion. I thank you for your heroic stands through which you proved that the dictatorial regime's forces are unable to hold out in the face of the valiant peshmerga forces of Kurdistan when they are prepared, run, and led properly. We expect further victories. March forward toward a decisive victory over the hectoring dictatorship. May God keep you and your victory. Your brother, Jalal Talabani.

Meanwhile, PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani sent a congratulatory cable to the PUK, the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan Toilers Party, and the Kurdistan Independent Labor Party forces on the magnificent victories achieved by the brave Kurdistan Peshmerga over the aggressive Fascist regime's forces on the Irbil axis. The following is the text of the cable:

Good greetings to you. With great pleasure I congratulate you on these magnificent victories. You embodied the spirit of joint struggle in your heroic offensives for a unified, federal, democratic Iraq. I hope these victories will be a prelude to a unified struggle by all revolutionary forces in Iraq. May your victories be blessed and a thousand salutes for our pious martyrs' souls. Your brother, Jalal Talabani.

'Special' Military Units Said Sent South

NC0903160595 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1505 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi opposition sources have announced that the dictatorial regime in Baghdad has dispatched special military units to the southern governorates of al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, and al-Nasiriyah.

Citing the opposition sources, the newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY reported today that the Baghdad dictator has assigned criminals 'Ali Hasan al-Kimawi [al-Majid] to be in charge of al-'Amarah Governorate, Saddam Kamil in charge of al-Basrah, and Rakan al- Juburi in charge of al-Nasiriyah. The sources noted that the dispatch of these forces is part of the regime's plans to prevent the outbreak of a new popular uprising in the south.

Government Troops Said Attacked

NC0903160195 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1534 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Unscheduled announcement]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ladies and gentlemen. At 2100 on 8 March, and in retaliation for the artillery bombardment of Kifri town and its suburbs, a heroic force of Kurdistan Peshmergas launched a heavy attack on the enemy positions occupied by a Popular Army Group known as the al-Tahhadi Group and a regular Army force.

The attack resulted in the seizure of the abovementioned sector and the surrounding hills. The enemy suffered the following losses:

1. Sixteen enemy personnel were killed, including one captain and two 1st lieutenants.
2. Sixteen Kalashnikov rifles were captured.
3. One 60-mm mortar was captured.
4. One set of binoculars and the camp's stocks were captured.
5. The enemy had to withdraw four tanks from the site after they were hit. They continued their random artillery bombardment of Kifri town.

PUK Peshmergas Kill 3 Soldiers

NC0903160695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1538 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the night 8/9 March, in retaliation for the continued shelling of the positions of the heroic Kurdish peshmergas and the villages in (Dawdah) region, a heroic unit of our peshmergas laid an ambush for the enemy forces on the main road between the towns of (Kufur Matu) and Qadir Karam. They waylaid a Hino-type military vehicle loaded with ammunition and a small oil tanker truck. Our forces killed three enemy personnel and captured a fourth. [passage omitted]

INC Condemns Regime's Attacks on Civilians

LD0903202195 London IRAQI BROADCASTING CORPORATION PRESS RELEASE in English 1712 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Received by fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salah al-Din, Iraq (9 March)—The following is a summary of situation reports received from IBC correspondents in northern Iraq on Thursday, 9 March.

We caution that the information we are receiving is fragmentary and sporadic as the situation inside Iraq is constantly changing.

1. An IBC correspondent based with the forces loyal to the INC [Iraqi National Congress] in Karkuk province reports that the Iraqi regime used aircraft to bombard the villages of Qara Wais and Khal Ziyani [name as received]. Two Pilatus aircraft carried out the bombardment early on the evening of Wednesday, March 8. Civilian targets were hit in the two villages.

2. Our correspondent also reports that the Iraqi regime used heavy artillery to bombard the city of Kifri for over three hours on the evening of March 8. A heavy and savage attack targeted civilians causing several hundred families to flee the city. Tens of homes were damaged and electricity and water were cut off.

3. An INC spokesperson in Salah al-Din condemned the attacks and said that they were a violation of UNSC [UN Security Council] Resolution 688 which demands that the Iraqi regime cease its oppression of the Iraqi people.

KDP Source: Peshmerga Positions Attacked

JN0903193095 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1715 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A military source at the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] has announced the following:

At 1100 on 8 March, armed men from the 66 Command [as heard] attacked the front positions of our party's peshmergas at the (Malla 'Umar) axis. At 1815 on the same day, they fired, for the second time, RPG's at our peshmergas' positions in the village of (Calacin).

Commentary on Unstable Domestic Situation

NC0803171795 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 8 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports have mentioned a new coup attempt in Iraq while clashes are taking place between the regime forces and Iraqi opposition factions in north and south Iraq. On the other hand, news agencies have mentioned that military rebellions have occurred at many military sites and barracks. In addition, the regime has withdrawn the Sokhoi aircraft from the Karkuk base to Tikrit and has installed air defenses over high ground and high-rise buildings in the capital of Baghdad.

These developments indicate that important changes are happening in Iraq. Tyrant Saddam has found no shelter for himself in Baghdad, therefore, he has moved to Tikrit to be away from any new possible internal developments. It is true that no one knows what will happen inside the country this year. It is also true that the regime has lost its security and military capabilities. But what is more true is that what is now happening in Iraq indicates a new situation with all its dimensions and developments. This situation is full of probabilities exceeding all developments and expectations.

What is happening now in Iraq indicates that everything is liable to change and that the regime is no longer the strongest side in the domestic equation. Even the military arm is no longer supportive of the regime's [word indistinct] and edicts. Rather, there are signs of uneasiness, revolt, and mutiny [break in reception] causing security problems for the regime and fear of what the future will be for it.

Tyrant Saddam's disappearance from the limelight and failure to receive PLO Political Department Head Faruq Qaddumi during his recent visit to Baghdad raised questions about the reason for this behavior, particularly because the tyrant [break in reception]...does not fail to receive any personality no matter how obscure or marginal. This disappearance was the first sign of these developments that have overshadowed the domestic situation.

The internal situation has become rife with pulling and pushing, which has made the regime sense danger so that tyrant Saddam has taken shelter in his palaces in Tikrit and a state of maximum alert was declared among his henchmen, tribe members, and supporters.

The clashes in north and south Iraq between the regime forces and the Iraqi people, in addition to incidents of military rebellion and mutiny and military coups and disturbances in Baghdad, are all signs indicating a new situation that will be a prelude to our people's salvation and liberation from the yoke of domination and [words indistinct].

BABIL Views Amnesty Report on Kurdish 'Violations'

JN0803220995 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 5 Mar 95 p 1

[Article by Sa'd Qasim Hammudi: "We Use Your Own Rope To Hang You With"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Amnesty International report on human rights violations in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region is further testimony exposing the abnormal situation imposed by the U.S.-Atlantic alliance on our dear northern Iraq following the cease-fire and under the cover of UN Security Council Resolution No. 688 of 1991.

The report included testimonies documented by photographs and films about the crimes of torture, murder, and rape which were perpetrated against the Kurdish citizens by the Kurdish party leaders themselves. This has led to the downfall of these treasonous cliques which have always bragged about defending the Kurdish people's rights when they are actually agents to the enemies of Iraq, the homeland of Arabs and Kurds, and a gang for killing, destruction, stealing, the destruction of public and private property, and the destruction of all the achievements which were made by the leadership of struggler President Saddam Husayn, the architect of autonomy throughout approximately two decades.

The continuous arrest campaigns between the Barzani and Talabani militias have completely exposed the lie of "safe haven" which was fabricated by the evil alliance under the name "Provide Comfort." This sought to provid it with air cover and forces stationed at the Turkish bases to secure protection for the agents who have tortured the sons of their people, relinquished all their gains, and tarnished their reputation with the Western circles which used humanitarian pretexts to support this internal colonialist fumble, which tried to embroider it with the colors of democracy, parliamentary elections, and party pluralism, which, in no time, their glittering pigments dissolved to expose the true nature of the tyrants who impose their control on our Kurdish people who adhered further to the Iraqi national unity under the leadership of architect Saddam Husayn.

We present the Amnesty International report to Madeleine Albright, America's representative at the United Nations, who, during her tour of foreign capitals, spoke nonsense and shed crocodile tears over the rights of the Kurds in Iraq. The aforementioned report shows the U.S. Administration's mistake to bet on its scabby horses. This also shatteres its sick dreams of imposing hegemony on the Iraq of the Mother of Battles, of plundering its resources, and of confiscating its national independent option.

'Foreign Circles' Launch 'Sabotage' From Kurdistan

JN1003110795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0920 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 10 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has accused the colonialist forces and foreign circles of seeking to turn the Autonomous Region into a springboard for conspiracies and acts of sabotage against Iraq.

In its editorial today, AL-THAWRAH says: The objective of these forces and circles is to distort Iraq's stands in order to maintain the blockade on it.

It warns the sons of our Kurdish people against the danger of these hostile approaches, and urges them to confront them and to repulse their satellites, tools, and agents.

The paper says: Our Kurdish people's experiences have clearly showed that resorting to the foreigner for support is a losing bet and a failed and devastating option.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Our people in the Kurdistan region are suffering badly from the acts of killing, tyranny, anarchy, and sabotage. They are living under the yoke of an extraordinary and extremely deteriorating political situation. The most important characteristics of this situation are the absence of the authority of the state and the law, the lack of security and stability, and the spread of an atmosphere of fighting among the warring Kurdish forces and groups.

The paper expressed confidence that the sons of our people now have a strong faith that their legitimate human and national rights cannot be achieved under the protection of the foreign forces, but only under the flag of the one united, strong, and prosperous Iraq. It urged the Kurds to respond to the Council of Ministers' call for a serious and responsible national dialogue to entrench national unity, foil the enemies' wagering and schemes, and develop the autonomy experiment.

Saddam Sets Up Citizens Complaints Committee Under 'Udayy

JN0903183395 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 21 Feb 95 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] The Citizens Complaints Committee that leader President Saddam Husayn has ordered to be formed under the direct supervision of 'Udayy Saddam Husayn, chairman of the Iraqi National Olympics Committee, began its work at the Interior Ministry yesterday.

The formation of this committee reflects leader President Saddam Husayn's concern about the problems facing the citizens and the need to resolve them.

UN Mission Says 'High Time' for Lifting Blockade

JN0903074495 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi mission at the United Nations has said it is high time for the Security Council to respond to the international community's will to lift the blockade imposed on Iraq.

In a press statement distributed at the United Nations yesterday, the Iraqi mission said it is time for the

Security Council members to acknowledge in their deliberations that starving all the people of Iraq is no longer an action for the Security Council to take on behalf of its members.

The mission explained that Mrs. (Ostoralev), official in charge of the Human Affairs Section at the [?Netherlands] Foreign Ministry, visited Iraq in (?December 1994), and prepared a report on the results of her visit. This report, which was sent to the United Nations, said: The humanitarian situation in Iraq is worrisome due to the lack of food and medicine. She also pointed out that the situation in Iraq is a humanitarian tragedy because the [words indistinct] in medical supplies, and the epidemics are quickly spreading.

In its press statement, the Iraqi mission said the facts indicated by the Netherlands eyewitness reaffirm the inhuman nature of the [words indistinct] against Iraq.

Algerian Party Official Appeals for End of Blockade

NC0803220995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1940 GMT 8 Mar 93

[FBIS Translated Text] Algiers, 8 Mar (INA)—The Algerian Movement For Democracy Party has appealed to the world community to stand beside Iraq to lift the blockade now that the reasons for the blockade have disappeared.

Speaking to the INA correspondent in Algiers, the movement's Secretary General Khalid Bin-Isma'il [name as received] stated that the Security Council members no longer know why the blockade is still in effect and under what pretext. He stressed that Albright's activity once again proves that the United States wants to serve its own political interests through the Security Council resolutions. He emphasized that the hostile U.S. policy clearly reveals to world public opinion the falsehood of the slogans of international legality and the UN resolutions which the United States has long brandished.

He expressed his confidence that the enemies' schemes will fail, thanks to the steadfastness of the Iraqis and their rallying around leader Saddam Husayn. He noted that America has gone beyond the limits of customs as well as international laws and charters and has violated the minimum human rights by insisting on continuing the blockade and the unjust and inhuman sanctions against Iraq.

He called on the world states to live up to their historic and humanitarian responsibility by putting pressure on the United States to prevent it from continuing its policy, which constitutes a mass genocide unprecedented in history.

Newpapers Condemn Blockade, 'U.S. Theater'

World Can Not Endure U.S. 'Blackmail'

JN0903094895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0720 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 9 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has said the world can no longer remain silent about obvious blackmail and piracy. The world can no longer endure the chain of allegations, falsehoods, and lies Washington is trying to circulate about Iraq.

In an article today, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says the methods the United States uses to justify continuing the blockade on Iraq have exposed objectives that contradict the commitments stipulated in known Security Council resolutions.

AL-THAWRAH continues: The agitation characterizing the current U.S. moves, the U.S. intention to use the veto, and the tour of world capitals by the U.S. UN delegate who is using pressure and blackmail to keep the blockade imposed on our people all reflect an evil and rancorous desire that is gambling on exhausting and subduing Iraq. This agitation represents the large bankruptcy facing the U.S. Administration and exposes its intentions.

AL-THAWRAH points out that the world is watching this piece of U.S. theater. It has begun to grumble about U.S. deception and U.S. disinformation that express follies that can no longer be met with silence. These follies undermine the living conditions of a deep-rooted people who deserve life and progress, now that Iraq has fulfilled its commitments, particularly Resolutions 687 and 715.

Concluding its article, the paper says Iraq is not looking for sympathy or asking for charity. Iraq wants its long-awaited rights, which are based on Security Council resolutions, not on the terms and interpretations of a U.S. Administration that is trying to control the Security Council according to its own mood and malicious concepts.

'Feeble Cover' for Blocked Oil Sales Seen

JN0903130995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0725 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 9 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH has said the hackneyed political talk by the U.S. Administration and its henchmen about the so-called need for Iraq to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions is both nonsense and feeble cover for this administration's aggressive economic objective of preventing the sale of Iraqi oil.

In an editorial today, the paper, which specializes in military affairs, says the halt to Iraqi oil sales during the five years of the blockade has increased Saudi Arabia's share of OPEC's oil at the expense of Iraq's share.

AL-QADISIYAH continues: Iraq's return to the oil market must be coupled with reinstating Iraq's legal share and cutting the additional Saudi share which was obtained through blackmail. This, however, is not sought by the U.S. Administration, which is making flagrant public threats to prevent the world states from supporting any resolution lifting the blockade imposed on Iraq.

The paper explains that oil is the major economic factor prompting the Americans and their henchmen to continue the blockade against Iraq. Earlier, the U.S. Administration and the Western media apparently attached less importance to this factor.

Concluding, the paper says the U.S. Administration is now aware that this issue has been exposed, so it publicly threatened to veto any UN Security Council resolution lifting the blockade. Thus, the U.S. Administration has placed itself in a position opposed to that of the Security Council and the United Nations under which it has long been moving. The paper points out that such a veto will turn the blockade into a U.S., not an international, blockade against Iraq. This, however, will not harm Iraq; it only shows that Iraq's independent national policy has succeeded.

Consequences of Failure To Lift Blockade Seen

JN1003104595 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0826 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 10 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has expressed a firm conviction that if the UN Security Council fails, due to U.S. pressure, to lift or ease the blockade imposed on Iraq, it will force its other members to ignore the blockade resolution and to go back to dealing with Iraq in rejection of the U.S. arrogance and hegemonistic policies.

In an analysis in today's issue, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party's paper says: Use of the veto by the United States to obstruct a resolution on lifting the blockade will actually serve as a measure that will forfeit all the legal justifications used to impose the blockade and convert it from an international blockade into a U.S. blockade.

The paper points to the results of Washington's use of the veto, saying: The other states will view this hostile action as being based on premeditated bad intentions, and will be further convinced that the United States seeks to support its own interests and to impose its arrogant will on the international community against its interests.

AL-THAWRAH stresses: By reaching the conclusion that the U.S. intentions are hostile, the other states will prepare the appropriate political atmosphere for an international political decision which will be based on a counteraction against U.S. intransigence. This will encourage many other countries to adopt stands which will take their national and vital interests into consideration, and which will qualify these countries, psychologically and practically, to resume trade relations with Iraq.

The paper says: Such an approach is a legitimate right guaranteed by international laws and charters. This applies to the current situation between Jordan and Iraq, where the United States allowed Jordan to import quantities of Iraqi oil to meet part of its fuel needs and to ease the economic losses it has sustained as a result of the blockade.

The paper says: This situation also applies to the formulas of dealing between the world states and Cuba on which the United States has been imposing a blockade since the sixties.

UN Asked To Reconsider Commission's Use of U-2

JN1003124995 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq has called on the United Nations to immediately reconsider the use of the U.S. U-2 spy plane, which violates Iraq's airspace in a way that conflicts with UN objectives and the principles of respecting the equality sovereignty of all member states. This came in a message the foreign minister addressed to the UN secretary general. The message was delivered by Iraq's representative to the United Nations the day before yesterday. The following is the text of the message:

Your Excellency UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, New York,

Your Excellency: I would like to refer to our messages to you, the latest of which was the message dated 2 Ramadan 1415 Hegira, corresponding to 2 February 1995, on the U.S. U-2 spy plane's violation of Iraq's airspace on the pretext of conducting an aerial survey for the UN Special Commission. I would like to inform you that during the month of February 1995 this plane violated Iraq's airspace three times, during which it flew over vast areas in Iraq. The hours of its flights during the above mentioned violations totalled 11.22 hours.

This plane has always taken off from its base on Saudi territory. After it completes its mission, it returns to the same base. Following are details of these violations:

On Thursday, 9 February 1995, from 1015-1420 hours—duration is four hours and five minutes.

On Friday, 17 February 1995, from 1200-1610—duration is four hours and 10 minutes.

On Friday, 24 February 1995, from 1103-1410—duration is four hours and seven minutes [as heard].

Your Excellency, these three violations have increased the number of the violations committed by this plane to

240. We denounce and condemn these unjustified violations of our airspace, and reiterate Iraq's stand, which it has always expressed, to the effect that this plane is used for purposes other than those set by the UN Security Council, and that its activity undermines Iraq's sovereignty and security. We also reiterate Iraq's request, which it has always expressed, to use Iraqi means in the work of the UN Special Commission instead of foreign means, in order to exclude any possibility of using these foreign means for purposes which encroach on Iraq's sovereignty and security.

Your Excellency: Your sound assessment of the nature of this plane and its true task was published by THE NEW YORK TIMES on 16 November 1993, in which you said: "I do not want a James Bond spy plane in the United Nations." This necessitates that the United Nations immediately reconsider the compulsory use of this plane in violating Iraq's airspace in a way that conflicts with the objectives and principles of the UN Charter of respecting the equality and sovereignty of all member states.

Please accept our high appreciation.

[Signed] Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, acting foreign minister of the Republic of Iraq

[Dated] Baghdad on 6 Shawwal 1415 Hegira, corresponding to 7 March 1995

Official Sends Message to Butrus-Ghali on Kuwait

NC0703193895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1850 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Mar (INA)—Acting Foreign Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi has stressed that the senior Kuwaiti officials on more than one occasion have adopted stances that show their disrespect for the rules of international dealings and for the provisions of the Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolutions 686 of 1991 and 687 of 1991, in terms of their commitment to respect Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

In a message addressed to the UN secretary general on 28 February 1995, a message that was adopted as an official UN document yesterday, Hammadi added that these stances continued even after Iraq's recognition on 10 December 1994 of Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence as well as the international borders as delineated by the UN Committee for Border Demarcation, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 833 of 1993.

The acting foreign minister referred to the message that Iraq sent to the UN secretary general on 15 March 1995 [date as received] regarding the Iranian aggression against Iraq on 11 February 1995, as well as the suspicious coordination that preceded this operation between quarters that are known to be agents for Iran's rulers and Kuwaiti officials. The aggression took place a few days after the visit to Kuwait by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the so-called "Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq", which is based in Tehran, and his meeting with the Kuwaiti amir, prime minister, and senior officials. He added that this constitutes flagrant interference on the part of the Kuwaiti government in Iraq's external affairs and an overt action that seeks to undermine its internal stability.

In his message to the secretary general, Acting Foreign Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi gave examples of remarks by senior Kuwaiti officials calling directly or indirectly for interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

Concluding his message, the acting foreign minister noted that these stances reflect the real policy adopted by the Government of Kuwait to undermine Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence and constitute a flagrant violation of its obligations under the UN Charter, the rules of international law, and the pertinent Security Council resolutions.

Intention To Return Kuwaiti Military Equipment Announced

NC0903201395 Paris AFP in English 1919 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, March 9 (AFP)—Iraq has announced officially here it intends to return to Kuwait more than 2,000 pieces of military equipment seized during its military occupation of the Gulf emirate.

In a letter to UN coordinator charged with the restitution of Kuwaiti property, Raymond Sommereyns, Iraq's UN Ambassador Nizar Hamdun said Baghdad was prepared to return more than 2,000 items, including heavy weapons and troop transports.

But the Iraqi document, which was dated February 27 but made public Thursday [9 March], also included an even longer list of Kuwait material demanded by the United Nations and which, according to Baghdad, could not be returned.

Iraq said the materiel had been destroyed or left behind during its withdrawal from Kuwait at the end of the Gulf War.

"Some of the items of equipment were left in Kuwaiti territory, at Kuwait airfields or at sea because they had been destroyed or were unserviceable and our units were unable to remove them on their return from Kuwait," Hamdun said.

Under UN Security Council Resolution 687, Kuwait must return all goods stolen during its occupation of Kuwait, but the requirement is not directly linked by the resolution to the lifting of an oil embargo against Baghdad.

The Security Council is scheduled to reexamine Monday the international sanctions imposed on Iraq.

Christopher Arrives for Talks With Leadership

Peres Welcomes Christopher

TA0903150895 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1415 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Statement by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres upon U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport; broadcast in progress—live, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ...Palestinian Authority from our standpoint. I think from the Palestinian side, it was really scheduling and organizing the continuation of the negotiations about the second stage.

We were greatly helped by the President of the United States, President Clinton, sending a letter to Chairman 'Arafat, emphasizing the issue and the importance of the issue of security, and the secretary calling up, from time to time, both the Palestinians and ourselves, urging us to deblock the negotiations on the Palestinian side.

I do believe that both the letter of the President and the intervention of the secretary were of great help, and actually today it was really a reopening in a very serious way [of] the whole Palestinian story. Chairman 'Arafat has announced in a very detailed way his position on security, and we, on our side, suggested a list of confidence-building measures, together with the philosophy about the negotiations. And I am very glad that the principles were accepted, and so we have an open-up [as heard] situation.

I do hope it will help the secretary on his very important mission going around to Jordan, to Syria, because my impression is that in the eyes of many of the Arab countries, the deblocking of the Palestinian issue is of great importance. And so, we are in a real coordination in time and content, and I do hope when the secretary will meet tomorrow Mr. 'Arafat, he will really bring it to a very clear conclusion the issues of security and the continuation of the negotiations.

In the name of the Israeli Government, I want to welcome you, Warren, very heartily.

Rabin: Peace With Syria Can Be Attained

TA0903185295 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said tonight that Israel can attain a peace agreement with Syria and that the government will be able to have such an agreement ratified in a national referendum. The remarks were made during his meeting with the U.S. secretary of state, who arrived in Israel today. Warren Christopher said it was time to make difficult decisions. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] [passage omitted] Warren Christopher proceeded from the airport straight to a meeting with Yitzhaq Rabin at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv. As usual, one of the central issues was terror. The prime minister revealed that Islamic Jihad leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi had recently traveled from Damascus to Iran to receive new instructions. Regarding the Syrian issue, Rabin announced that the talks between army officers will be resumed following Christopher's tour, while the U.S. secretary of state spoke of the present's being a critical opportunity for progress.

[Rabin, in English] I would like to make it clear: We are capable of achieving peace with Syria; we want to achieve peace with Syria. [passage omitted]

[Rosen] Inside the conference room, Yitzhaq Rabin told Warren Christopher: There is time to achieve a peace accord with Syria. This pronouncement may imply that despite the fact that time is running out for Yitzhaq Rabin, he still thinks the chance is not lost. [end recording]

Tonight the prime minister lashed out at Egypt and Syria, saying they sabotage the normalization between Israel and the Gulf and North African states. Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that these remarks were also made in his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher tonight.

Rabin Announces Lifting of Naval Blockade

TA1003085995 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 10 Mar 95 pp A1, A10

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In their meeting last night, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin informed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that on the occasion of his arrival in the region Israel had lifted the naval blockade in Lebanon. Rabin explained that the blockade had been imposed as part of the war against Hizballah's terror. [passage omitted]

The prime minister further told the U.S. secretary of state that if there is no terror 80 percent of the Israeli public will support the peace process with the Palestinians. According to him, "the people do not want Gaza back."

The members of the U.S. team were favorably impressed with Rabin's mood yesterday and termed the session with Christopher "good." [passage omitted]

Rabinovich Sees Conditions 'Ripe' for Syria Talks

TA1003071195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[FBIS Translated Text] Warren Christopher was one of the first and only people to be in on the news that

Yitzhaq Rabin was popping over to al-'Aqabah to speak with the king about Jordan's debt write-off, among other things. The debt write-off issue had been also raised at the talks between the Israeli and U.S. teams at the prime minister's bureau in Tel Aviv yesterday afternoon. The prime minister protested the U.S. refusal to write off a debt of some $300 million, although they had almost casually written off an Egyptian debt of about $9 billion after the Gulf war. It should be noted in this context that the prime minister raised the problem of Egypt and Syria's impeding the process of the Arab world's opening up to Israel, which began after the agreement with the PLO was signed. In any event, Warren Christopher promised that the matter would be arranged, and he almost thanked Israel for using its clout with Congress on the matter of the Jordanian debt write-off.

Thus the Israeli-Jordanian peace seems to be quite entrenched, and a date—the beginning of July—has been set for the completion of the negotiations with the Palestinians. As for Syria—a hard nut to crack—the prime minister yesterday conveyed a message to President al-Asad, speaking both inside the conference room and publicly: We want peace, the prime minister said; we have sufficient time as well as the ability—he must have been referring to political ability—to attain an agreement with Syria.

Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich implies, and even states, that all the conditions for resuming the talks between him and Syrian Ambassador al-Mu'allim and between the two sides' army officers are ripe.

[Begin recording] [Rabinovich] Naturally, we are not conducting negotiations for the sake of negotiating. The purpose of the talks is to find solutions to problems. The very idea of convening army officers from the two sides reflects a recognition by the two parties and by the United States of the fact that the security issue is the cornerstone of any arrangement, that there is no point in squabbling over border lines or withdrawal lines before understanding is achieved on the crucial issue of security. The cart should not be put before the horse. First of all, an understanding on security issues should be reached, and only then should questions on the nature of peace and the final border between the two countries be addressed.

The Syrians chose to create an artificial crisis in the talks at the end of December. We think the circumstances which led to that do not exist any longer, and the conditions for resuming the talks are now ripe.

[Raz] You are saying that there is a high probability that the ambassadorial talks will be resumed?

[Rabinovich] I do not want to speak in terms of probabilities or certainties. I would say that had I been an impartial observer of these negotiations and the preparations made for them, I would have said that after today's talks with the Americans here, there should be no objective difficulty to resuming the talks. [end recording]

Syria Blamed for Omani, Tunisian Decisions To Delay Ties

TA0903111595 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 9 Mar 95 p 7

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister and foreign minister are very angry with the Syrians over the political pressures they have exerted on Arab states who wanted to develop relations with Israel. The issue will feature at the talks Secretary of State Warren Christopher will hold in Jerusalem today.

It appears that the Syrian pressure has been fruitful and is making Israeli policymakers very angry. For instance, Tunisia informed the United States that it has decided to cancel the naval exercise which was supposed to be held in late March off its coastline with Israel's participation. In addition, Tunisia has suspended indefinitely the arrival of the Israeli representative who was supposed to open the interests office there.

Israel is also concerned about Oman's announcement that it has decided to put off the establishment of interests offices by the two countries. Israel is convinced that the Syrians, who are trying to disrupt Israel's developing ties with the Arab world, are behind these decisions.

Rabin Returns From al-'Aqabah Meeting With Husayn

TA1003055795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night Prime Minister Rabin and King Husayn discussed difficulties impeding the negotiations with Syria. At a nocturnal meeting in al-'Aqabah, Rabin informed Husayn that he had told the Americans that Jordan should be assisted by having its debt written off. There is no connection, the prime minister said, between his flight to al-'Aqabah and his talks with Secretary of State Christopher.

Rabin returned from al-'Aqabah to Tel Aviv after midnight. Yo'av Ya'aqov met him upon his return:

[Begin recording] [Ya'aqov] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has returned from a meeting with King Husayn in Jordan, which was held in accordance with an agreement between the two men to meet occasionally to discuss the Middle East peace process.

[Rabin] Above all we are interested in anchoring the agreements which have been already achieved—the one between us and the Palestinians, and certainly the peace treaty between us and Jordan—and to exchange ideas on what has been happening in the field of openness in the Arab world, the chance for resuming the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. This is even more important right now, during the visit of Secretary of State Christopher, who is certain to make an important contribution to the anchoring and strengthening of the peace treaty with Jordan in the context of the U.S. pledge to write off Jordan's debt and in the context of the resumption of the peace negotiations with Syria.

[Ya'aqov] The prime minister said his night trip to Jordan and his meetings with Secretary of State Christopher are not directly related, but we should remember, Rabin said, that we are in the midst of intense political activity. In reply to a question on the clandestine nature of his talks with King Husayn, Rabin said that it should be remembered that similar talks had generated the peace treaty between the two countries. Israel and Jordan share the goal of achieving Middle East stability, preventing violence and terror, and enhancing economic development. [end recording]

Likud Says Erez Meeting 'Another Capitulation'

TA1003070795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The opposition Likud party says yesterday's meeting at Erez between Foreign Minister Peres and PLO Chairman 'Arafat was another capitulation by Israel to the Palestinians. The party says in a statement that the government is turning the State of Israel into a hotbed for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorism. At the Erez meeting described by Peres as a breakthrough, the two sides set the 1st of July as a target date for completing talks on an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Arab towns in the West Bank ahead of Palestinian elections. [passage omitted]

The 12 member countries of the European Union have responded positively to Israel's request to organize and supervise the Palestinian elections in the territories. The EU countries view the effort as an opportunity to increase their involvement in the Middle East peace process.

King Husayn Meets With Rabin in al-'Aqabah

Rabin Arrives

JN0903204495 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 9 Mar 95

[From the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king held a meeting tonight with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. The Israeli prime minister arrived in al-'Aqabah for a short visit to Jordan. During his stay, Rabin will hold talks with his majesty the king on means of implementing what had been agreed upon in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The Israeli prime minister was received at the airport by the prime minister and the chief of the Royal Court.

Rabin Departs After Meeting

JN1003060595 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin held a closed meeting at al-'Aqabah Palace last night, followed by an expanded meeting attended by a number of ranking officials from both sides.

During the meeting, talks dealt with ways and means of implementing what the two sides had agreed on and the articles of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and Royal Hashemite Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim. On the Israeli side, it was attended by a number of senior officials from the Israeli prime minister's office.

Rabin left al-'Aqabah last night.

Al-Kabariti Briefed on 'Arafat-Peres Meeting

JN0903192795 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the foreign minister, has received a telephone call from Ahmad Quray', official in charge of economy in the Palestinian National Authority [PNA]. Quray' briefed al-Kabariti on the outcome of the talks between PNA President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres at the Erez crossing point, especially the talks dealing with transportation across the bridges.

Government Prepares for Husayn Visit to U.S.

JN0903155195 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 9 Mar 95 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—AKHBAR AL-USBU'—The Jordanian Government has begun intensive contacts with the U.S. Administration to pave the way for His Majesty King Husayn's anticipated visit to the United States on 24 March.

A senior Jordanian official, who asked to remain anonymous, told AKHBAR AL-USBU' that His Majesty King Husayn's visit to Washington was scheduled in advance, that the king will not pay this visit ahead of the scheduled date, and that this visit has nothing to do with the issue of Jordanian debts to the United States or with the U.S. Congress' decision not to write off all of these debts.

The official added that His Majesty King Husayn's visit to Washington acquires special importance following U.S moves that are hostile to Jordan, as demonstrated by the congressional decision. King Husayn is expected to hold talks with President Clinton on this issue and on the need to economically support Jordan to enable it to perform its duties toward its people and toward the international community through major U.S. economic and military support. Moreover, the two sides are expected to discuss the Middle East peace process and the need to support this process economically.

The Jordanian official said that Jordan presented the Casablanca economic summit with projects worth $18 billion. It also presented requests for military aid amounting to $2 billion based on U.S. promises to respond to Jordan's economic and military needs. However, none of this has been achieved yet.

The Jordanian official said there is a strong trend within the Jordanian Government to cast doubt on Washington's credibility and that it is now reinforced by the U.S. Congress' recent decision.

The official said that U.S. Vice President Al Gore will arrive in Amman today [as published] on a visit that was scheduled in advance. This visit, however, is aimed at preparing for King Husayn's visit to Washington and at discussing the U.S. stand toward Jordan.

The Jordanian official said that Jordan respects the U.S. Congress' desires and its concern about the money of U.S. taxpayers. He added that at the same time, however, Jordan stresses that Washington's failure to fulfill its financial commitments will undermine U.S. prestige and will make the world lose confidence in dealing with any future U.S. Administration, whether Democratic or Republican.

Moreover, His Majesty King Husayn is expected to hold talks with U.S. Secretary of State Christopher in Amman on Monday [13 March] on the same issues he will discuss with President Clinton. Foremost of these issues is the issue of Jordanian debts to the United States.

It is worth noting that the most recent visit paid by His Majesty King Husayn to Washington was in July of last year.

Official Describes U.S. Policy as 'Unfriendly'

JN0903163995 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 9 Mar 95 p 14

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that a senior Jordanian official informed the U.S. Administration, during a meeting held recently in Washington, of

Jordan's extreme resentment toward Washington's policy vis-a-vis Jordan and described it as unfriendly.

The Jordanian official said that Jordan has implemented five U.S. requests, but received nothing worthwhile in exchange for this, while the political and economic demands of others have been fulfilled. According to the Jordanian official, the following are the five U.S. requests:

—Implementing an economic reform program despite the toughness of this program, which has resulted in a real drop in the income of the Jordanians and in an increase in the number of poor people in Jordan.

—Declaring democracy and political pluralism despite the fact that Jordanian society is not yet qualified politically for this and despite the fact that other regional countries have not yet implemented democracy and political pluralism. This has instigated these countries against Jordan and created new hostility toward Jordan and its policy, something which it did not count on.

—Agreeing on the Oslo accord despite the fact that the agreement was concluded secretly while the Jordanians and Palestinians, who were working together within a joint delegation, were negotiating with the Israelis in Washington, and despite the fact that Jordan was committed, together with the other Arab countries, to coordinating with each other on any stand, something which harmed Jordan's relations with Syria and Lebanon and which did not improve its relations with the Palestinians.

—Tightening the sanctions on Iraq although Jordan was not convinced of need for this.

—Signing the peace treaty with Israel in exchange for generous U.S. promises.

The senior Jordanian official, who was speaking with senior U.S. officials, said that Jordan has not received anything worthy in exchange for all this. He added that Jordan's relations with its neighboring countries have deteriorated, Washington has not fulfilled its commitments, and Jordan's economic and political burdens have increased.

Ministers Reportedly Refuse To Meet Jewish Groups

JN0903162895 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 9 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that a number of Jordanian ministers in the government of His Excellency al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir refused to receive the American-Jewish delegation that visited Jordan recently and met with His Majesty King Husayn, who spoke to them about the peace process.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has also learned that these ministers had previously refused to meet with other Jewish delegations. Thus, the Jordanian Government has reduced the number of visits to Jordan by Jewish and Israeli delegations and imposed a media blackout on such visits.

The ministers' excuse was that it is too early to receive Jewish delegations because they have nothing to say to them, they cannot show courtesy to them, they did not participate in the peace process, and they will not comply with the articles of the peace treaty because they were not part of the government that signed it.

Israeli Tourist Buses 'Pelted' With Stones

JN0603122795 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that two buses carrying Israeli tourists were pelted with stones while passing through the al-Karamah area in the Central Jordan Valley on Tuesday and Wednesday [28 February and 1 March].

Eyewitnesses told AL-MAJD that the two buses sustained minor material damage and that only glass windows were broken. They said that one Israeli tourist was cut by strewn glass pieces.

The security forces that escorted the two buses and those which rushed to the scene of the two incidents failed to arrest any of the stone-throwers, who fled the area. Thereafter, the al-Shakirin Mosque in the al-Balawinah area adjacent to the scenes of the incidents was sealed off, thus preventing 'Id al-Fitr and Friday prayers on Thursday and Friday.

Israeli Tourist Held for Using Counterfeit Money

JN0803182995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of tourists from Kafr Kanna was prevented from entering Jordan for some time today after it was discovered that a member of the group tried to pay the entry fees at the Shaykh Husayn Bridge, the border station between the two countries, using counterfeit Jordanian dinars.

Our correspondent reports that the commander of the Jordanian police station at the bridge informed his Israeli counterpart that he intended to hand over the group's organizers, who were found to be in possession of the counterfeit Jordanian banknotes, to the Jordanian police. He said all other members of the group would be sent back to Israel. The Bet She'an police investigations officer then came to the Jordanian side of the bridge and discussed the matter with Jordanian police. One member of the group, who admitted he had used the counterfeit money, was detained for interrogation. The others were allowed to enter Jordan as they had originally planned.

U.S. Envoy Describes Efforts To Lift Israeli Blockade

NC1003064695 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri yesterday summoned U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ron Schlicher who briefed him on the outcome of the U.S. contacts to put an end to the Israeli aggression, particularly the naval blockade.

The U.S. official told al-Hariri that Washington is holding extensive contacts with Israel to convince it to lift the blockade. He said that the talks dealt with several issues, including bilateral relations and what is going on in the region. He added: We also discussed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region and we both expressed hope that Christopher will succeed in finding the means of giving impetus to the peace movement in a way that will benefit all the countries and peoples of the region.

The U.S. official said that they also discussed the situation in the south and expressed hope that the two sides will find the means for reducing the tension there, especially if this will lead to a better climate during Christopher's tour so that the latter can concentrate on continuing his comprehensive talks. He noted that the United States believes that the best way for solving all the problems in the south is involvement in the peace process in which we are all partners.

Schlicher did not mention whether Christopher will visit Lebanon during his current tour but noted that the U.S. secretary visited Lebanon twice in the past. He said: Citizens on both sides of the borders are suffering and we have to find the solution for the problem in order to put an end to this suffering and this can be done by ensuring the success of the peace process.

Al-Hariri Announces End to Israeli Naval Blockade

NC1003120895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri announced today that he was informed by the country's official security services this morning that Israel had lifted the blockade which it had been imposing on fishing boats along the entire southern Lebanese coast.

Prime Minister al-Hariri said he believes that lifting the blockade was a result of the talks that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held with Israeli officials, who, by this ploy, sought to turn his regional tour into a security-oriented visit.

According to eyewitnesses and security sources, Israeli gunboats were no longer in evidence at dawn today. No vessels could be seen with the naked eye along the entire southern coast.

Southern ports, particularly Tyre, Sidon, and al-Sarafand, saw some light maritime activity pending further clarification of the situation in the wake of the Israeli decision to lift the blockade. Fishermen who sailed more than 3 km into the sea announced that they had not been subjected to any harassment.

Iranian Embassy Condemns Israeli Attack, U.S. Statements

LD0903174495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Beirut has condemned the beastly attack of the Zionist enemy on southern Lebanon and the blockade of the country's ports.

The embassy said statements by U.S. officials that the ending of the blockade depended on conciliation talks were a dangerous sign.

According to embassy officials, the statements were a green light for the Zionist regime to continue an aggression that violates all humane and international laws and regulations.

Al-Shar': Christopher Visit Could Spark Talks

NC0903190995 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has stated that Damascus will not be pressured by the time factor in dealing [lan tata'amal] with the peace process. He added that this process is not about chasing after the unknown.

[MBC Correspondent] Fadi Isma'il met with the Syrian foreign minister on the sidelines of the Social Development Conference in Copenhagen and asked him whether Christopher's visit could achieve a breakthrough in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

[Begin recording] [al-Shar'] If Israel acts in accordance with the bases on which it the peace process was established—which are just and objective—progress could be made on the Syrian-Israeli track in the coming weeks. Christopher's visit could mark the start of this progress.

[Isma'il] Israeli officials have set the middle of this year as the latest date for achieving peace, after which their attention will turn toward the elections. Is this date realistic?

[Al-Shar'] There is some truth in the predictions that the coming months will be decisive, whether negatively or positively. However, under no circumstances will we deal with the peace process under the pressure of time. If the Israelis believe that in the coming months the peace process can achieve positive results, we welcome it. If, by talking about time and the shortness of time, they mean that the peace process has just a few months before it and that if it does not succeed it will have to wait for many years, this will not change Syria's stances. Because the basis of the peace process is to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that will lead to the stability and security of the region and not to run after the unknown or accept any unfair conditions. [end recording]

Commentaries View Prospects for Peace Talks

U.S. Called To Break Stalled Talks

JN0903160395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Whenever the U.S. Administration makes moves to push the peace process forward, Israel counters these moves and any trips by U.S. envoys to the Arab capitals concerned with the peace process, by building new settlements in the occupied Arab territories, or by mounting a fresh aggression on Lebanon and stepping up attacks on Lebanon, or by intensifying its repression and terrorism in the occupied Palestinian territories, or by violating the terms of reference of the peace process by articulating a flawed offer that fails to meet the minimum requirements of just peace. Ahead of the current tour of the region by the U.S. secretary of state, Israel has done all of the above. It has stepped up its settlement activities and confiscated thousands of hectares of the occupied Palestinian territories for military training purposes, not to mention the escalation of its attacks on steadfast Lebanon, as manifested in the air raids it is launching, the artillery shelling it is mounting, and the naval siege it is laying to the Lebanese coast. Worse still, Israel has continued its terrorist siege of the occupied Palestinian territories and persisted with the killing of Arabs in these territories. Moreover, Israel, through its prime minister, has made a proposal that it is well aware Syria will reject because it violates the relevant international legitimacy resolution. We are here referring to the Israeli prime minister's proposal regarding a partial Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. This offer is in itself provocative. But to add insult to injury, Rabin has said that this extremely limited withdrawal will take more than three years, by which time Syria or Syrian intentions will have been tested, as Rabin put it.

It is to be recalled that Israel has gone to excess in using the term "test." It is an established fact that nobody on the globe is entitled to test the intentions of another party; that is, to demonstrate arrogance in its dealings with another party. The issue takes on an extremely serious dimension when the party that is demonstrating arrogance is Israel, which, since 1949, has been failing the test put to it by the United Nations, which said that the admission of Israel into the world body would be contingent upon Israel allowing the Palestinian refugees to exercise the right to repatriation. Israel pretended to have accepted this condition at the time only to go back on this acceptance once it was admitted into the United Nations. Then, it articulated David Ben-Gurion's slogan, which runs as follows: Not even a single refugee will be repatriated. This means that Israel is opposed to the repatriation of even a single Palestinian refugee. Worse still, Israel is even denying the Palestinians displaced in the 5 June 1967 war the right to repatriation. With all this, Israel has hindered Warren Christopher's current tour of the region. With these and other similar tactics, Israel was forced into the peace process. The situation has remained unchanged. It is to be noted that the entire world community, particularly the U.S. partner in the peace process, is certain that Syria views peace as a strategic option, and that it has done all that it could to facilitate the launching of the peace process without asking for anything more than that which is enshrined in the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and the territory-for-peace formula, which all provide for complete Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders. The U.S. peace initiative, which Syria has welcomed from the outset, was grounded in these resolutions and the territory-for-peace formula. Syria also welcomes the efforts being made by Secretary of State Christopher.

Syria believes that the activation of the peace process is important. Nonetheless, it believes that what is more important is the existence of U.S. ideas that would promote the credibility of the U.S. initiative by way of effecting a positive change in the Israeli stand in order to elicit an Israeli commitment to the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which provide for Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and the occupied Arab territories on all fronts to the 4 June 1967 borders. This is the peace that Syria could accept. This is the peace required by the international community. Syria will not accept anything short of this peace. It is to be recalled that it is possible to promote such peace by equal and equitable security arrangements on both sides, arrangements in which no party is given privileges to the other's detriment. To sum up our argument, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has said that we are advocating full peace in exchange for full withdrawal.

Press Hopes Tour Will Promote Peace

JN0903085795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper TISHRIN says: Israel is continuing its policy of expansion, aggression, the Judaization of Jerusalem, and the annexation of important parts of the West Bank to the so-called greater Jerusalem. This plan also includes the Golan and southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN adds: Israel uses security as a pretext for this policy and for acts of aggression that violate the simplest laws and principles of the international community. According to the reversed Israeli logic, Israel is also putting security above peace

The paper explains that peace guarantees security. It says aggression and occupation lead to war and catastrophe, and, consequently, to insecurity. The paper says Syria simply views peace as the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy. These resolutions do not permit occupation, annexation of others' territories, the building of settlements, or altering the features of the occupied territories. Instead, they provide for the end of Israeli aggression and the removal of its effects.

TISHRIN adds: Moreover, Syria cannot discuss peace issues without regaining all of its usurped territory. The paper calls for focusing international efforts on convincing the Israeli rulers to respond to the principles of justice, to the right to self- determination, and to implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy. These resolutions provide for withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: It is high time for the West, which has supplied Israel with the means of strength and survival, to assume its responsibilities, return Israel to the right path, work to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and to translate the peace initiative into tangible reality on the ground.

Commenting on the same topic, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Instead of Israel's circumvention of the terms of a just and comprehensive peace, which is designed to keep the Arab territories, and instead of sticking to impossible security terms, which is designed to impose Israeli hegemony over the Arabs, it would be better for the Israeli officials to respond to both the bases of the peace process and the U.S. efforts that are based on the known U.S. initiative. This initiative stipulates the land-for-peace principle.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Syria does not want to prematurely judge the new tour of U.S. Secretary of State Christopher. It hopes this tour will bring something new to promote the peace process in accordance with the principles of international law and the bases of the peace process. However, the signs coming from Israel do not herald anything new or call for optimism.

Concluding its comment, AL-THAWRAH calls on the U.S. Administration to end Israeli maneuvers and to reemphasize the importance of the bases of peace. The U.S. Administration should commit Israel to accepting the exchange of full peace for full withdrawal, so the peace process can be saved and its objectives can be achieved.

Israeli Peace Stand Examined

JN1003082595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its commentary today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH writes on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region.

The paper says: Christopher's success in his mission depends completely on the Israeli stand. If Israel continues its stands toward the peace process, the U.S. secretary's mission will not achieve its objective. However, if a change occurs in the Israeli position through abiding by the terms of reference of the peace process, then we can say Christopher's mission will achieve progress to give a push forward to the peace process.

The paper discusses the Israeli stand, which is characterized by intransigence and maneuvering, and notes: On the eve of Christopher's tour, Yitzhaq Rabin proposed a very small partial withdrawal from the Golan.

AL-BA'TH wonders: What does this mean? Does it not mean Israel is determined to pursue the policy of concluding partial and separate deals, and of dissociating with the terms of reference of the peace process whose bases were set in Madrid?

The paper says: Syria is fully aware of Israel's games. This is why it has rejected and will continue to reject any such proposal. Syria, which seeks true peace, says that in order to achieve a true peace in the region the resolutions of the international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle must first be implemented.

In its commentary on the same subject, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: A quick review of the outcome of three and one-half years will show that the peace process has continued to turn in a vicious circle and has not left the first station for two reasons. The first reason is Israel's rejection of the peace bases and its refusal to respond to its efforts, and the other is that America has not adopted a decisive stand, based on the full partner's role, against the party that froze these efforts and continued to place obstacles in front of the peace process, namely, Israel.

The paper says: Peace will continue to be unattainable as long as Israel is shielded from international punishment or pressure by the sides which can pressure it to unleash the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH adds: If America really wants to achieve progress in the Syrian-Israeli track and the Lebanese-Israeli track, it should pressure Israel to make it announce its abidance by the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH stresses: The peace process needs an impetus to achieve peace based on its well-known conditions and in accordance with the international legitimacy and the bases of the Madrid peace conference.

In another comment, the paper discusses the overall practical stands and measures on the ground which have constituted, from the very beginning, the main characteristic of the negative dealing with the peace process. It also discusses the flagrant violations of the pillars and conditions of a just solution and its requirements.

AL-THAWRAH says: Israel has not given one single piece of evidence to show that it wants peace.

The paper notes: More than three years of the political process were obstructed by Israel through its maneuverings, procrastination, intransigence, and desire to have land, security, and peace altogether without giving anything in return. It has escalated its political rejection of the principle of full withdrawal from Golan, southern Lebanon, and the other occupied Arab territories, and of returning to the pre-4-June 1967 lines.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Peace cannot be imposed by terrorism and military force, and cannot be made by relinquishment of rights, land, and national interests.

Concluding its commentary, the paper stresses the need for the U.S. Administration to assume its role, relinquish the policy of bias toward and patience with Israel, and be aware that wasting time is not in the interest of peace.

In the "With the Events" column, the newspaper discusses the Lebanese national consensus about Lebanon's territorial integrity, the liberation of all Lebanon, and the restoration of the south.

It says: These essential demands enjoy Arab and international support, especially because Lebanon's future and security depend on them.

AL-BA'TH stresses that in their upcoming meetings in al- Nabatiyah, Lebanon's deputies, ministers, and citizens will stress an established fact, namely, that Lebanon is resistance and resistance is Lebanon.

Afghanistan

Major Fighting Continues Between Factions in Kabul

LD1003084595 Mashhad Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dari 1430 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Fighting continues in west and southwest Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. A spokesman for the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan in Peshawar this morning [8 March] announced the news and said that the joint forces of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, chairman of the Supervisory Council, and forces of the Ettehad-e Eslami of Sayyaf this morning attacked the positions and points under the control of Wahdat-e Eslami in west Kabul. The Wahdat-e Eslami spokesman, in a telephone interview with the correspondent of the external services, added that following the attack the forces of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and Sayyaf were confronted with severe resistance by the forces of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami- ye and, having sustained losses, they retreated. He also said that the forces of Wahdat-e Eslami and the forces under the command of General Abdul Rashid Dostam this morning mounted an attack and succeeded in liberating Chehel Sotun Palace in Kabul from the hands of Afghan Government forces. This spokesman added that during this attack, 70 men from Borhanoddin Rabbani's forces were captured and a large amount of weapons and equipment was taken from them as booty.

The central news unit correspondent in Islamabad reports that during clashes in Kabul yesterday [7 March], at least 30 were killed and another 90 were wounded. At the same time, Abdul Ali Mazari, the leader of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan, confirmed that the forces of that party are defending themselves with all their might against the attacks by government forces. He warned that if the attacks by the government are not stopped, this party will use everything at its disposal against the government postions. [passage omitted]

Mazari's Forces Surrender

LD0903171095 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abdol Ali] Mazari's militiamen were cleared from the strategic regions in the western part of Kabul.

BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reports: After three days of air and artillery attacks by the Islamic army, the resistence of Mazari's men was crushed and his men surrendered in groups.

Security sources report that Dar ul-Aman Palace and its adjacent areas, Rayasat-e Panj, Russian Embassy, and Deh Morad Khan road have been freed from the control of Mazari's men. The process to clear the rest of the region is continuing.

According to the eyewitnesses, the impact of the Islamic army attacks was to such an extent that all the Mazari's missile points were destroyed and Mazari's men have retreated.

Today the exchanges of fire was relatively less compared to the previous days. The reason was, according to the military officials, the crushing of the resistence by Mazri's men.

According to a military source, the operations will continue until the western parts of Kabul are completely cleared.

These operations began four days ago when Abdol Ali Mazari did not pay any attention to government's peaceful proposals and resorted to firing missiles [words indistinct] on Kabul city. [passage indistinct]

According to political analysts, the departure of Mazari's men from the western part of Kabul is considered an outstanding victory for the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA].

A year ago, ISA was under [words indistinct]. This government victory ended the last opposition forces in Kabul. [words indistinct]

Taleban Claims 'Breakthrough'

LD0903173495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Members of the Taleban group have positioned themselves in some areas of west Kabul. According to agency reports, while a spokesman for the Taleban group described the evacuation of positions by the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami forces as a breakthrough that resulted from an agreement between the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami and Taleban, some reports indicate the falseness of that statement. So far there have been no comments in this regard by the leaders of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami.

On the other hand, reports indicate that sporadic clashes between President Rabbani and Taleban forces, especially south of Maidan and Dehmazang, are in progress and the two sides, claiming their superiority in the current fighting, are firing at each other's positions with artillery and automatic weapons. [passage omitted]

Rabbani Forces' Attacks Subside

LD0903222195 Tehran IRNA in English 2116 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 10, IRNA— Attacks launched by forces loyal to Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani from Monday [6 March] on residential areas and on Afghan Wahdat Islamic positions west and southwestern part of the capital city of Kabul subsided on Wednesday.

Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] party leader 'Abdol 'Ali Mezari had warned on Tuesday that forces under his command would put Kabul-based government positions under their Scud missiles target if forces under Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's command did not halt their attacks by Tuesday.

An Afghan issues expert considered a halt in the forces' attacks stemming from the warning. However, a spokesperson affiliated with Rabbani's Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society] party claimed that the government had stopped the offensives to hold talks and prevent further bloodshed.

About 200 have been killed or injured as a result of surface to air missiles fired by pro-Rabbani forces on Wahdat party's positions west of Kabul from early Monday.

Meanwhile, head of Afghan Embassy to Peshawar Seyed Habib Shah told IRNA on Wednesday that government forces had captured Wahdat party's positions in Qaleh Qazi and Rasht Barchi fronts.

In related news Taleban movement and government forces have sustained casualties as a result of clashes erupted between the two belligerent parties in southwest of Kabul.

The two sides entered into a clash following Taleban movement's warning government that it would station its forces in the battle fronts if clashes west of Kabul was not halted on Wednesday.

An Afghan source told IRNA here Wednesday that Taleban forces advanced their tanks and personnel carriers deep into several regions under Wahdat-e Eslami party's occupation, including Dasht Barchi, Darulaman and Dughabad, west of Kabul.

However, the reports have not yet been confirmed by Taleban movement and Wahdat-e Eslami party.

A Jam'iyat-e Eslami party official announced in Peshawar recently that his party had also received such reports but was not informed of any detail regarding ths issue.

Taleban movement forces have been deployed in suburban areas south of Chahar Asiab over the past couple of weeks after capturing the city, which is 15 kms south of Kabul.

Taleban forces have also entered into a clash at Delaram in Rah state west of Kabul in the past few days with forces under command of Ismail Khan, who is an ally to Rabbani.

Rabbani, Mas'ud Meet Pakistani Religious Leader

LD0903181595 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Quoting the presidential press office, the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reports that esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan received last night Mawlana Fazalur Rehman, head of Jamiat Ulema Islam of Pakistan and his accompanying delegation.

At the meeting, the esteemed president expressed satisfaction at the visit of the delegation.

In return, Mawlana Fazalur Rehman explained the reason for his visit and added: Our wish is to see that complete peace and tranquility is established in Afghanistan and the people live under a climate of tranquility.

The meeting was attended by esteemed Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, minister of city planning and housing; esteemed Ahmad Shah Mas'ud; esteemed 'Abdol Ghafar Sayem, acting minister of transport; and esteemed Mohammad Sadeq Chakari, acting minister of border affairs.

Pakistan Attempts Mediation Role

BK0903154995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1538 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, March 9 (AFP)—Sporadic fighting broke out Thursday [9 March] as Afghanistan's Taleban student militia locked horns with forces of President Borhanoddin Rabbani in southwest Kabul, swapping mortar and automatic fire.

The fighting—particularly fierce south of Dehmazang Square, a strategic area in Rabbani's hands—came as the Taleban moved into positions in the southwest of the city vacated by Rabbani's rivals, the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat.

Presidential officials said 38 Taleban fighters had been captured and some 20 killed, although this could not be confirmed independently.

The prisoners later told AFP that the Taleban had not come to the capital to fight with pro-Rabbani troops, but had been tricked by the Wahdat into passing well beyond their frontlines and into the fray with government forces.

The Taleban—a newborn Islamic movement—reached the edge of Kabul after a succession of victories against various factions fighting in Afghanistan and have pledged to take the capital and install Islamic law across the country.

Wahdat and Rabbani forces have been locked in bitter fighting this week that left more than 70 dead and at least 865 wounded, hospital sources here said.

The Shiites apparently decided late Wednesday to hand over to the Taleban rather than surrender to Rabbani's troops.

The students then moved in, supported by tanks and artillery, and clashed with the presidential forces, which used jets to stop the advance.

Meanwhile, in Charasyab, 25 kilometres (15 miles) southeast of Kabul, the head of a Pakistani peace delegation told AFP that fighting between Taleban and pro-Rabbani troops in south Kabul was the result of a "misunderstanding."

Pakistani religious leader Maulavi Fazlur Rahman said the Taleban had been invited into southwest Kabul by the Wahdat based there, who wished to surrender their positions to the students rather than pro-Rabbani forces.

"Our Wahdat escort said their jeep was broken and told us to go ahead. We did so and came under fire and bombardment," said one Taleban commander, Mohammad Wali.

"Fighting started by accident. We were ambushed, but then we carried on with an attack," said a Taleban fighter, who claimed the militants had captured some posts from pro-Rabbani troops in south Kabul.

Security officials said 10 seriously wounded Taleban were taken to hospital.

"We are trying to bring a peace settlement between the Taleban and the Kabul government," Fazlur Rahman said, adding that he was in the Afghan capital at the personal invitation of Rabbani.

He said he would not predict an early peace settlement as his mission was still "in the initial stages of talks."

He added that he had already met with Rabbani and his strongman, ex-defence minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud from the Jam'iyat-e Eslami faction, and Rabbani's Pushtun ally, Ittihd-e Eslami faction leader Rasool Sayyaf.

In Tehran, a Wahdat leader, Mohammed Nateghi, denied that fighters from his group had abandoned their positions in Kabul to the Taleban.

"Wahdat fighters were occupying Thursday afternoon the same positions" in Kabul and reports that they had surrendered them to the Taleban were "false," he said.

Fighting, meanwhile, was reported in southwestern Afghanistan between the Taleban and forces of Ismail Khan, a Rabbani ally.

Rabbani government officials claimed the Taleban had been repulsed from Delaram in southwest Farah province while fighting was also reported in nearby Helmand province.

The latest upsurge in fighting has hampered UN efforts to end Afghanistan's long-running civil war.

Rabbani has remained in power, even though his term in office ended last December. The United Nations has been trying to persuade him to stand down and hand over power to a transitional administration.

Bangladesh

Central Bank Says Economy 'Moving Ahead'

BK0803134095 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 28 Feb 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The economy of the country is moving ahead with the increase in the foreign exchange reserves, satisfactory trade balance, growth in exports, imports and inflow of foreign investment.

This was stated by Mr. Khorshed Alam, Governor of Bangladesh Bank [state bank] at a press conference while reviewing economic performance of the country during the first half of the current fiscal year. He said the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected at 5.5 per cent for 1994-95 might be achieved if the present economic trend continued. The economy had not shown any indication that the projected growth rate might have to be revised.

The Bangladesh Bank Governor said that the foreign exchange reserves of the country has reached an all time high 3.15 billion U.S. dollar till January this year, up from 2.42 billion U.S. dollar during same period last year.

Dwelling on the export performance during the first six months of the current year, Khorshed Alam said the export earnings till December 1994 amounted to 1.69 billion dollar as against 1.38 billion dollar during the corresponding period of the last year. The export earning showed 25 per cent rise on the average during the period under review, he added.

According to him, the export of frozen food has gone up by 50 per cent, leather and leather products 51 per cent, jute goods 30 per cent, readymade garments 21 per cent.

The export earnings from raw jute and tea declined as compared to the last year, he admitted.

On the import side, the Governor said the country had fared well in the first half of the current year. The import bill till December 1994 stood at 2.41 billion U.S. dollar up from 1.92 billion dollar during the same period in 1993. He said there was substantial increase in the import of industrial raw materials and capital machinery. The import bill for industrial raw materials for the first half of the current fiscal year rose to about one billion U.S. dollar as against only 686 million dollar for the same period last year (1993-94).

The import bill for capital machinery stood at 166 million U.S. dollar during the first six months of the current year as against only 81 million during the corresponding last year. Besides, the import bill for miscellaneous goods was up by 40 percent in the current year. The bill for miscellaneous rose to 214 million U.S. dollar in the first six months of the current year from 155 million during the same period last year. Mr. Khorshed

Alam said that the import of capital machinery and the industrial raw materials would give a spur to the overall economic activities.

The trade balance of the country, he said, stood at 587 million dollar from July to December 1994 and there was rise in the remittances from Bangladeshi expatriates abroad. Foreign remittances increased to 584 million U.S. dollar in the first half of the current year as against 520 million dollar last year.

In the domestic economy, the credit disbursement was to the tune of Taka 1,888 crore, out of which Taka 1,579 crore went to the private sector and the rest was given to the public sector. The disbursement of agricultural credit during the first half of the current year was Taka 606 crore, up from 460 crore Taka for the period under study.

He said foreign investment flow was 'rising steadily' and was recorded at 50 million U.S. dollar during the first six months of the current year. Of the total investment only 5 million U.S. dollar came as foreign direct investment (FDI) and the 45 million dollar was portfolio investment. The total foreign investment in the entire 1993-94 fiscal year was 53 million U.S. dollar. He hoped that the foreign investment both in terms of FDI and portfolio investment would reach 100 million dollar by the end of current fiscal year. This however, excluded the foreign investment in KAFCO [Karnafuli Fertilizer Company]. He said that there was no reason that the foreign investors in the country's share market would be scared as he did not forsee any Mexico-like crash.

The Governor of Bangladesh Bank admitted that there was increase in the rate of inflation during the period under review which was recorded at 3.6 per cent. The inflation, he said was 3.79 per cent in the food sector and 3.34 per cent in the non-food sector. He attributed the cause of rise in the inflation rate to spiralling rise of food price. He hoped that the inflation could be contained at average 3 percent by the end of the current year through some fiscal measures.

The Governor said the money supply in the country was up by 7.5 per cent in the first six months of the current year from 4.42 per cent last year. The economy he firmly believed was in a position to absorb the growth of money supply to at least 13 to 14 per cent.

India

Mission Rejects Karachi Murder Allegations

BK0903155395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian High Commission in Islamabad has termed as baseless and irresponsbile, the allegations of the Sindh chief minister that India is responsible for yesterday's killing of two U.S. Consulate employees in Karachi. In a press release, the Commission says the attention of the High Commission was drawn to a dispatch of the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN quoting the chief minister of Sindh making the allegations. Other representatives of the Government of Pakistan are also reported to have made similar allegations. The High Commission says the allegations are motivated.

Tight Security Reported at U.S. Embassy in Delhi

LD0903135395 Tehran IRNA in English 1313 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 9, IRNA—Security has been stepped up around the Pakistan High Commission and the US Embassy in New Delhi following the killing of two US Consulate employees in Karachi on Wednesday.

Additional force has been deployed around the two embassies and mobile patrolling in the area where most of the embassies are situated has been strengthened. According to police sources, these measures are being taken to prevent any fallout of the Karachi incident. The US Embassy official had also requested the Indian Government to provide them with additional security.

'We are taking all necessary measures to ensure that the American Embassy here is not targeted', said a senior police officer.

Meanwhile, press attache of the US Embassy Steven Sache refused to comment saying 'we do not talk about security as a matter of policy'.

U.S. Urged To Reassess 'Kid Glove Treatment'

BK1003103795 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 10 Mar 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Killings in Karachi"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The killing of two employees of the US Consulate at Karachi on Wednesday is a sad commentary on the state of law and order in the port city. That they died for no other fault than that they represented the US and were posted in a city where the law of the jungle seems to prevail makes it all the more tragic. That they were killed at a busy intersection and the killers could easily get away is a proof that it is the underworld which calls the shots in Karachi. All this is not surprising given the fact that Karachi has become a hunting ground of warlords, terrorists and criminals. Arrest of the killers and their interrogation alone will reveal the motive in striking at the Consulate staff. Nonetheless, the incident should serve as an eye- opener to the US, which has been showing Pakistan considerable indulgence over the years. The gun culture that prevails in Karachi is a hangover of the days when the US used Pakistan as a conduit for arming the Mujahideen to drive out Soviet forces from Afghanistan. On its part, Pakistan had been diverting a part of the weaponry for arming the terrorists in the Kashmir Valley. If in the process, some of those weapons had fallen into the hands of criminals and the fundamentalist and ethnic militias, it is nothing astonishing. This explains to a large extent the high killing rate—almost 10 a day—in Karachi.

Despite such hard evidence, the US has been fighting shy of declaring Pakistan a terrorist state. The kid-glove treatment it has been getting from the US has encouraged Pakistan to assign for itself a bigger, if not over-ambitious, role in the region as can be inferred from its efforts to prop up Taleban in Afghanistan. Yet, it is surprising that there is a body of opinion-makers in the US who continue to view Pakistan as a trusted ally. Their campaign to amend the Pressler Law, which in any case has failed to serve its purpose, to facilitate easier arming of Pakistan should be seen in this context. Any such amendment, which will gladden the arms industry in the US, will further encourage Pakistan to persist with the kind of role it has been playing in the sub-continent. The killings should make Washington reassess the emerging scenario in Pakistan and its relations with Islamabad.

Minister Hints at Allowing Consumer Goods Imports

BK0803140295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, has said efforts will be made to further rationalize the long-term export-import policy. The minister told PTI that India might allow import of consumer goods in a phased manner depending upon the foreign exchange reserves, the capacity of Indian industry and a number of other factors. He said India has already fulfilled this obligation under the new GATT accord.

'Cheerful Tidings' Seen for Foreign Trade

BK0503122595 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 5 Mar 95

[Commentary by C.G. Srinivasan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country's foreign trade front now offers cheerful tidings as the overall export for the current fiscal year is likely to sustain the 20 percent growth rate for the second year in succession. Trade figures furnished by the Commerce Ministry show that India's exports during the first 10 months of 1994-95 fiscal year—that is, April 1994 to January 1995—were estimated at $20.87 billion as against $17.79 billion during April- January 1993-94, marking a growth rate of 17.26 percent. What is the matter of comfort is that despite initial slackness the country's exports picked up momentum and verve from August 1994 onward.

While exports during April-January 1994-95 were $20,871.01 million, imports amounted to $22,708.42 million, leaving a trade gap of $1,837.41 million. It may be recalled that as a result of the bold economic reforms encompassing industrial and trade fronts launched in mid-1991, India's exports registered a modest spurt of 3.8 percent in dollar terms during 1992-93 against negative growth in the previous year. Export growth was consolidated during 1993-94 when exports reached a momentous level of about $22.2 billion, logging a growth of 20.4 percent over 1992-93 and exceeding the target, though modestly.

A particularly noteworthy feature on the foreign trade front is that India has crossed the low-level equilibrium and is all set to sustain high export growth. The most remarkable feature of last year's impressive export growth was that it supervened at a time when there was a perceptible and precipitous fall in exports to the former Soviet Union from a level of $1.6 billion during 1991-92 to $0.7 billion last year. Commerce Ministry is buoyed up by the strength in exports so far. It is sanguine about accomplishing the export target of $25 billion in the current fiscal year despite the slowdown in exports during the initial period which was accreditable to seasonal factors partly aggravated by the plague scare that held up shipment of goods for a brief period.

The import growth during the first 10 months of 1994-95 fiscal year is a significant one at 23.55 percent as it reflects the pickup in industrial production, breaking the recessionary syndrome that afflicted the economy during the initial few months of 1994-95. The notable aspect is that imports of petroleum, oil and lubricants, POL, showed a modest decline during the first 10 months, reflecting higher domestic crude production and reduced import dependence. POL imports during April-January 1994-95 are estimated at $4,674.46 million as against $4,707.69 million during the corresponding period in 1993-94, showing a decline of 0.71 percent. Since POL imports constitute nearly 20.6 percent of total imports, even modest decline in imports makes considerable relief to the overall import bill.

In view of the pickup in trade, the new commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, maintained recently while addressing the Board of Trade members in the capital that the overall policy framework of export-import, ex-im, policy modifications to be announced on 31 March 1995 would be exporter-friendly and only genuine changes keeping in view the need to maintain stability in policy framework would be made. He also unveiled new norms for strengthening the value-based advance licensing, VABAL, scheme which is meant to encourage exports by providing exporters access to duty-free imports for production purposes. The commerce minister also announced an alternative to the International Price Reimbursement Scheme, IPRS, calling it Engineering Products Export Replenishment of Iron and Steel Intermediate Scheme, where domestic steel producers would attempt to supply iron and steel for manufacture exports at international prices.

Both these measures together with the Commerce Ministry's zeal to streamline procedures and policies by simplification would go a long way in accelerating the country's exports. The government has realized that the sustainability and credibility of the reform policies would eventually be tested only by how these policies have really helped in boosting the country's foreign trade which at present is a little over 0.5 [as heard] in world exports. Considering the vastness of India's economy and its limitless potentials, it is imperative to enhance our share in world exports of goods as well as services.

Iran

Conoco Deal 'Further Blow' To U.S. Policy

LD0903133795 Tehran IRNA in English 1302 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Mar. 9, IRNA—Oil markets have taken in their stride following Washington's escalating war of words against Iran with crude prices showing little change in rates.

The tendency appears to ignore the recent U.S. rhetoric assault, twinned between threatening a total oil embargo against Iran and old propaganda about a supposed Iranian military build-up in the Persian Gulf. A further blow to American policy to isolate Iran was seen in the weekend signing by Conoco of a 'buy-back' accord to develop two Iranian offshore oil fields, the first of its kind since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Prices of North Sea benchmark Brent Crude for April delivery closed at 16.79 dollars per barrel Wednesday [8 March] night.

According to ENERGY COMPASS, the oil markets were turning a "deaf ear" to the escalating war of words after warning last week that a total U.S. ban on Iranian crude could send prices soaring and backfire on Washington. The oil daily in its weekend review also referred to the U.S. backtracking over claims of Iran stationing Hawk missiles in the Persian Gulf with President Clinton moving to play down the scare story.

Speaking on Saudi television on Monday, Defense Minister, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz also cast doubt on U.S. credibility, saying there was no escalation regarding the missiles and that Riyadh had "no animosity with Iran."

Paper Details NIOC-Conoco Oil, Gas Deal

NC0903214995 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 7 Mar 95 p 1

[TEHRAN TIMES Economics Desk report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—National Iranian Oil Company [NIOC] has signed "buy-back" accord with a Dutch oil company Conoco to develop two offshore fields in the southern Persian Gulf, the Oil Ministry said yesterday.

The Oil Ministry statement said the agreement was signed Sunday [5 March] in the Netherlands between the NIOC and Conoco.

The Conoco was to put up "all the necessary investment to develop the two fields of Sirri A and E," it said, describing Conoco simply as a company registered in Holland.

Conoco will be reimbursed by a "buy-back" agreement for the oil and gas produced over five to eight years from the start of production scheduled to begin in two and a half years, the statement said.

The rate of resale will be calculated "according to market prices," the statement said adding that production for the two fields should reach 120,000 barrels per day (bpd).

Conoco competed with the French company Total to win the contract which has been negotiated over the past three years. It is the first such "buy-back" accord since 1979 as Iran has always refused to share oil production with foreign companies.

It is also the first such accord with an Dutch firm concerning oil.

Iran is hoping to earn some $12.5 billion in oil revenues and about $750 millions in gas sales through the accord, the statement added.

And at least 30 percent of the work will be subcontracted to Iranian companies which will benefit from a transfer of technology and training for their staff.

Under the agreement Conoco will also collect gas produced in the two neighboring fields Sirri C and D for export to Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. Sirri E has reserves estimated at about 435 millions barrels while Sirri A has about 50 millions barrels.

Current Iranian oil production is estimated at about 4.2 million bpd of which 450,000 bpd is offshore production, according to official figures.

German Delegation Visit Said To Prove U.S. Policy Futile

NC0903215395 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Mar 95 p 2

[Editorial: "German Delegation Visit to Iran a Slap in the Face"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] From the very first day of the culmination of the Islamic Revolution, the West, particularly the United States, has been trying to undo what the Iranian nation achieved.

This nation succeeded in the establishment of an Islamic system under the wise and able leadership of the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Imam Khomeyni, the Leader of the deprived.

The White House launched an untiring propaganda against Iran in order to distort Islam and the Islamic system. The Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic eradicated the domination of Iran by U.S. imperialism.

Today we see that the essence of the Islamic Revolution has reached across the globe, awareness created among the masses, and exploitation by the imperialist nations has become difficult, if not impossible.

Directly or indirectly, the U.S. and the regimes subservient to it admitted the ever-increasing impact of the Islamic Revolution across the globe, especially in the Third World.

The U.S. left nothing unexplored in keeping Iran isolated, but failed. The U.S. effort to isolate Iran has not received the least attention from the Third World. A great many presidents and prime ministers have visited Iran in the recent past.

The developed countries were hesitant and fell into the U.S. mousetrap, but for a short time. We see signs from Western nations inclined to resume normal political and economic relations with Iran.

One example is the current high-level visit of a German delegation to Iran for a resumption of economic ties.

Germany's decision to resume economic ties will be followed by other developed nations such as Japan and France, once proving U.S. efforts futile.

U.S. Charge of Missiles on Islands Debunked

NC0903221295 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Mar 95 p 2

[Editorial: "No Comment"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United States has made yet another charge against Iran, a charge later retracted.

The Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, said last week that Iran had installed missiles at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. What he did not say is that this is on Iranian territory, and what he did not say is that the U.S. sold us these missiles.

Last July a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires was bombed, killing and injuring many. Israeli intelligence blamed this on Iran.

Recently, Argentine officials exonerated Iran, saying that Iran had no role in the incident.

In January it was said that in legal files released to a law firm in Washington, Iran had been implicated in the bombing of Pan Am 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988.

There was much commotion in the British Parliament. "If Iran is to blame," said one member of Parliament, "then why have we blamed Libya for the past six years?" And he was right to be angry.

But a few weeks later it was said that what they had was not evidence; it was second-and third-hand information.

In other words, Iran is a good scapegoat. Whatever happens, blame it on Iran. And then, Oops, sorry, we don't think Iran did it!

To what extent must we pay attention to such allegations, using up energy to answer them? Should we write editorials, belittling ourselves by denying them, or should we sip tea, watch the news, shrug, and say, "No comment"?

Commentary Views Diplomat Killings in Pakistan

NC0903164195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Urdu 1330 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In yesterday's attack on U.S. diplomats in Karachi, two members of the U.S. Embassy staff were killed and one was wounded. The assailants fled from the scene of the crime and so far no group has assumed responsibility for the attack. Since in the past few months there has been increased intervention in Pakistan's internal affairs by the United States, which has generated heightened anti-U.S. sentiments among the Pakistani people, it does not seem unlikely that the armed groups have incorporated attacks on American citizens in this country in their activities to increase their own social popularity.

Especially since this attack took place in Karachi, which has become a center for sectarian clashes in the past few months, impartial observers believe that U.S. policies in Pakistan are the catalyst for the escalation of these clashes. As for what possible reverberations the killing of U.S. Embassy staff members in Karachi will have, this is an issue that is being presented on the government level with a hue and cry.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent a private message to U.S. President Bill Clinton expressing regret at the killing of U.S. diplomats. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has assigned three teams the responsibility for finding and arresting those responsible for these murders. The Pakistani Government is apprehensive that this incident may adversely affect the visit in the near future by Benazir Bhutto to the United States, which is aimed at encouraging U.S. investment in Pakistan.

It is possible that the affluent individuals may not display any inclination to cooperate with Pakistan, or at least at the level of Pakistan's expectations. On the other hand, it must be noted that the political differences among the Pakistani factions, on the part of Nawaz Sharif for example, have spawned more problems for the government on important national issues such as Kashmir, the nuclear situation, and the rejection of Benazir Bhutto's proposals for economic development and cooperation. In addition, with the murder of these diplomats in Karachi, the security situation will become even more fragile.

The fact is that a number of people are killed daily in the sectarian clashes. The killing of U.S. diplomats—regardless of the motivation—is incidental and is not expected to have any particular effect on the already frigid relations between the United States and Pakistan.

Russia's Mityukov, Ruhani Comment on Talks

NC1003070995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The first deputy speaker of the Russian State Duma who had come to our country at the head of a delegation, left Tehran last night. Before leaving Tehran, Mityukov told our correspondent that this was the first visit by a high-ranking Russian parliamentary delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and said that the major objective behind this visit was to create strong parliamentary relations between the two countries. He added: During this visit, the Islamic Republic's initiative for convening an interparliamentary session of the five Caspian littoral countries was examined, and the Russian parliament's agreement that this session be held was announced. The Russian State Duma deputy speaker added: Among the other topics discussed with the Iranian officials was ways to expand bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Deputy Majles Speaker Ruhani also commented on the outcome of the visit by this delegation to our country and told our correspondent:

[Begin recording] [Ruhani] During the visit by this delegation to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the two countries' parliamentary relations were discussed. Following these discussions, it was decided that the two countries' parliamentary relations should be closer and the Majles commissions should establish closer contacts with the Russian State Duma commissions, and that closer relations should be established between the leadership of the two parliaments. God willing, in 1995 a parliamentary delegation will visit Moscow and Russia in answer to this visit so that we can continue the talks that were held in Tehran. Moreover, the two parliaments believe that we should create an interparliamentary group of the five Caspian littoral countries. We hope that in 1995 we will be able to hold the first interparliamentary session of the Caspian Sea neighboring countries in a coastal city of one of the five littoral countries.

Also, the two sides agreed that Iran and Russia should expand their cooperation in the various industrial and political fields. Especially the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the grounds for Russia's continuing presence in the implementation of the Second Five Year Plan exist and that Russia can have a more active presence in the implementation of this Plan.

In the economic fields, as far as the issue of atomic energy and the construction of a nuclear power plant for peaceful purposes, on which the two countries have signed an agreement, are concerned, the two sides agreed that this agreement should be implemented. Both sides stated their belief that countries on the other side of the world do not have the right to interfere in relations between two neighboring countries and that their intervention will not have any impact on the firm determination of both countries. [end recording]

The Majles deputy speaker added: Among the other topics discussed with the Russian delegation was the problems of Tajikistan and the situations in Karabakh and Chechnya. Mr. Ruhani said: We have asked Russia to use political means instead of force to solve the Chechen crisis, and the Russian delegation agreed with us on this issue as well.

Va'ezi Comments on Visit to Central Asia

LD0903175795 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Upon return from a visit to four Central Asian countries, Mahmud Va'ezi, deputy foreign affairs minister for European and American affairs, said: The five littoral states of the Caspian Sea have confirmed the region's nonmilitary status and have also reached agreement on a 20-mile zone for fishing and free shipping by all five states.

Our country's deputy foreign affairs minister referred to the expanding trend of cooperation between Iran and the Central Asian countries and said: Continuing that trend, Iran will establish separate economic committees with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in Tehran in the near future, and high ranking officials of those countries will discuss methods of bilateral economic cooperation in Tehran. Later in the interview, Va'ezi referred to a request made by the officials of four Central Asian countries for the continuation of the peaceful efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve the current crisis in Tajikistan and said:

[Begin Va'ezi recording] The issue of Tajikistan was one of the main topics of our discussions during this trip. We all shared the view that the Tajik crisis should be resolved through negotiation. It was decided that we should discuss the outcome of our talks with the Russian deputy foreign minister, who visited Iran recently, and with the Tajik opposition. A high-ranking Tajik official will also meet the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials, which we believe will be a very appropriate opportunity to bring the efforts of the last two weeks to fruition. [end recording]

Cairo Said Seeking To 'Improve Relations'

LD0903215995 Tehran IRNA in English 2131 GMT 9 Mar 95

[All names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, March 10, IRNA—Cairo is looking for ways to improve relations with Tehran, Khartoum and Baghdad.

According to the Khartoum newspaper SUDAN AL-HADITH's Wednesday [8 March] issue, sources very close to the ruling class in Egypt said that when Egypt's mediation role in Middle East reconciliation ended, to come out of isolation, Egypt is trying to improve and expand relations with Iran, Sudan and Iraq.

The sources added that some foreign hands are at work trying to weaken relations between these countries even more.

On the other hand the Egyption Hizb al-Ahrar and Hizb Tajammo' parties in their daily papers published articles on cooperation between Arabs and Islamic countries, stressing the need to establish good relations between Egypt, Sudan and Iran.

Also the leader of the Liberal Socialist Party, Mustafa Kamel Murad, and Jamaal Rabi', leader of the Egyption Party in separate interviews with IRNA reporters in Khartoum said they hoped that the start of economic relations between Iran and Egypt to be the first step towards expanding relations between the two countries in other areas.

Rebel Radio on Regime's Plot Against Kurds

NC1003080495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary: "Yet Another (?Proof) of the Islamic Republic's (?Helplessness)"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] For many years now the devoted children of the Kurdish people in Iranian Kordestan—under the leadership of the Democratic Party of Kordestan—have been resisting the hellish rule of the Islamic Republic for the sake of defending their national identity and of vindicating their legitimate and human rights. During this long period, the reactionary rulers of Iran have tested each and every way to force the Kurdish people to kneel down and to [words indistinct] the children of these (?brave) people. [passage omitted]

After all these tests, the officials of the Islamic Republic have despicably resorted to a new plot and have started another futile effort. In the (?middle of this year), the regime gathered the parents and relatives of the peshmerga in all parts of Kordestan and hypocritically told them that apparently the so-called esteemed leader of the revolution has issued general amnesty orders and that this is a good opportunity for the parents of the peshmerga to convince their children to return and to benefit from this gesture of Islamic kindness. Meanwhile, they also threatened to take steps against those who do not return.

Following these lies and fabrications, which the [word indistinct] have woven on the eve of the new year, the regime made hundreds of peshmerga relatives leave their work to go the peshmerga bases in order to convince their dear ones to return to the warm bosom of Islam—that is, to the hell of the Islamic Republic.

Now, let us see how successful the reactionary rulers will be in their new efforts and, basically, how sincere their words are. We should also add that when speaking to the relatives of the peshmerga, the officials of the regime expressed their (?reactionary) wrath and hatred toward the Kurdish people's movement not only in Iran but throughout Kurdistan and also greatly insulted the national sanctities of the people whom they had forcefully gathered to talk to.

But why was the so-called esteemed leader's general amnesty not officially announced and why was it not broadcast on the radio and television and published in the press? There may be several answers to these questions. First of all, the reason may be that basically no such general amnesty has been issued and that this allegation too is a lie similar to the thousands of lies by the regime to the people of Kordestan and of Iran.

Second, even if this general amnesty does exist, no matter how confused the regime's officials are, they know that the freedom fighters will not pay any attention to the so-called esteemed leader's amnesty and will not be ready to give up their honorable positions. They are very well aware that it is the Kurdish people and the other peoples in Iran that (?should decide) whether they should pardon or punish the ruling criminals and not the regime officials who should issue general amnesty orders.

Third, if among the thousands of peshmerga, one [word indistinct] is fooled by this hypocrisy, the regime will be able to empty all its venom on him and, sooner or later, hand him over to the pitiless executioner far from the eyes of the world.

But the reactionary rulers can rest assured that none of the freedom fighters will surrender to their inhuman demand and will continue their respectable and brave struggle.

We warmly welcome the dear compatriots who have come to the peshmerga bases to visit with their dear ones. [words indistinct] the Islamic Republic officials will be disgraced and the strugglers for the freedom of the Kurdish people and of all the other peoples of Iran will emerge the prideful victors.

TAKAPU Reviewed After Printing 'Vulgar' Poems

LD0803140695 Tehran IRNA in English 1353 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA—The council for supervising press activities in its weekly session on Monday [6 March] reviewed the conduct of the monthly magazine 'TAKAPU', and postponed a decision on continuation of publication till next week. In its last issue the magazine printed vulgar poems which people, society of press, authors and university students found them offending and protested against them.

According to the secretariat of the council, the council in its yesterday session also reviewed new requests for publishing licences.

Call For Increased Punishment for Overcharging

LD0903213995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Majles held a second open session this evening at 1930. [passage omitted] According to a report by our correspondent, during the session a bill with single urgency priority, which was signed by over one hundred deputies, was proposed to the Majles for increasing the punishment of those who overcharge.

The signatories have called for all prices of goods and services to be reduced to their level of 23 October 1994, except those goods and services whose prices have been approved within the 1374 [year beginning 21 March] budget act. Those who do not implement the reductions shall be considered a mohareb [a person who wages war against God] and receive the punishment that has been set for moharebeh [the act of waging war against God, which usually carries a death sentence] in Islamic revolution courts.

Official Warning Given on Level of Energy Consumption

LD0803183095 Tehran IRNA in English 1740 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA—An Oil Minsitry official on Wednesday [8 March] warned that the continuation of energy consumption in Iran at its current level would endanger the country's economy.

Addressing a one-day seminar on 'Energy Management in Industry' Mohsen Hashemian, advisor to the oil minister and head of the for international studies on energy said the consumption of energy has sharply increased in third world countries particularly in Iran whereas the rate in industrial countries has fallen over the past 15 years. [sentence as received]

Stressing the need for the country to cut down energy consumption, Hashemian advised officials and experts concerned to offer a properly designed pattern for energy consumption.

He pointed out that 25 percent of energy output of the country is consumed in industry sector.

He also said that the Institute for International Studies on Energy has launched studies on optimum use of energy energy and offering of a proper energy consumption pattern. [sentence as received]

The meeting, attended by a group of experts and industy managers, was cosponsored by the Institute for International Studies on Energy and the Energy Minsitry's research center.

Petroleum Minister Answers KEYHAN Questionnaire

NC0903092795 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 15 Feb 95 p 15

["Text" of Petroleum Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh's responses to a KEYHAN questionnaire sent to cabinet ministers and officials "on the eve of the revolution anniversary"—all figures as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] 1. We are on the threshold of the Second Five-Year Plan. How do you assess the first Five-Year Plan in your area of management?

[Aqazadeh] In the years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, most attention and hopes were pinned on this sector in view of the major role played by oil and the accruing foreign exchange earnings in the country's economy and in providing fuel and energy.

But the country's economy faced a huge slump in its foreign exchange earnings, a budget deficit, and losses from a dwindling Gross National Product [GNP] due to the fall in international oil prices in 1365 [year beginning 21 March 1986], a situation that continued until 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1987]. [passage omitted]

Planning and policymaking for the country's energy resources were based on the following three fundamental moves:

1. Rebuilding and building after the devastation caused to the oil industry by the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war.

2. Investment geared to production.

3. Replacing petroleum byproducts with natural gas and raising the production of value-added petrochemical products by diversifying production.

In line with this planning, the production of crude oil rose from 2817 thousand barrels per day in 1367 to 4072 thousand barrels per day in 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993]. As a result, export and refinery capability also rose. Similarly, production capability in the field of petrochemicals rose from 5.3 million tons to 7.6 million tons in 1372; this was one of the quantitative objectives of the Petroleum Ministry and it has been achieved.

The statistics speak for themselves. The performance of the main strategic [preceding word in English] indicators in the oil sector at the end of the first Plan proves that the targeted objectives have been exceeded. This would not have been possible but for the efforts of all the employees in the petroleum industry.

A glance at projects indicates that the most successful projects in the first development plan were the discovery of six oilfields with reserves of 9527 million barrels of crude oil and four gasfields with reserves of 135.16 trillion cubic feet of gas. Other valuable finds include the vast southern Pars gasfield with an average reserve of 100 trillion cubic feet of gas and 2.5 billion barrels of liquid gas; the construction and reconstruction of the Abadan refinery, which had been destroyed, making it operational with a refining capacity of 400 thousand barrels of oil daily; and the setting up of the Arak refinery. [passage omitted]

2. Recently the government placed the campaign against high prices at the top of the list of its priorities, something the people and the media welcomed. How do you view this? [passage omitted]

[Aqazadeh] [passage omitted] The government's strategy and action in combating high prices are based on its adherence to the fundamental policy of the social justice system, which enjoys the support of all. Naturally, I contribute to this too. [passage omitted]

News of Montazeri's Marja'iyat Denied

95LA0123C Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in Persian 7 Dec 94 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] 12 Azar [3 December]—Radio Mojahed and Voice of London have quoted some so-called clergy and lecturers from Qom, stating that Mr. Montazeri is qualified to occupy the position of marja' and succeed Grand Ayatollah Araki. This announcement was denied in a press release by Qom seminarians.

On 4 Azar [25 November], Radio Mojahed, quoting sources identified as clerics and lecturers from Qom seminary, announced: "The consensus among this group is that Ayatollah Montazeri is superior to others in the knowledge needed for succeeding the deceased Ayatollah Araki."

Also, the British Government radio repeated the same announcement. Following the death of Grand Ayatollah Araki, a group of seminarians from Qom issued a statement announcing that the news of confirmation by a group of clerics of Mr. Montazeri as the marja' is false and constitutes a forgery. Their statement is as follows:

In the Name of God—A statement was recently issued in which Mohammadi Gilani, Musavi Ardabili, Mu'men, Mahdavi Kani, Musavi Zanjani, Mohaqeq Damad, Gerami, Khalkhali, 'Aba'i Khorasani, Tavassoli, Abtahi Kashani, Taheri Khorram-Abadi, Mahfuzi, and Shams Golpaygani were said to have confirmed Mr. Montazeri as the marja'.

When the above gentlemen were contacted, they denied such confirmation and emphasized that the late Imam had ruled that he [Montazeri] is not qualified to occupy any position related to governing Muslims.

Pakistan

Shiite Group Accuses U.S. of Murdering Naqvi

NC0903152895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Urdu 1330 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The members and students of the Imamiyah Students [pro-Iranian Shiite] Organization of Pakistan will stage protests all over Pakistan tomorrow of the murder of the adviser to the leader of the Pakistani Shiites, Dr. Mohammad Ali Naqvi.

According to our Islamabad correspondent, the Imamiyah Students Organization president said in an interview in Lahore yesterday that the United States was responsible for the murder of the adviser to the leader of the Pakistani Shiites. He asked the Bhutto government to make the necessary investigations to expose the facts regarding this murder. He accused the United States of fomenting discord among the Muslims and called for an interrogation of the U.S. ambassador in Pakistan regarding this murder.

Speaking in Lahore yesterday, Pakistani Shiite leader Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi said: Sectarianism has no meaning in Islam and the forces hostile to Islam are seeking to sow discord among the Muslims by hatching and implementing diabolical plots.

Our Islamabad correspondent reports that Allama Syed Sajid Naqvi, who was speaking at the interment ceremonies for his adviser, Dr. Naqvi, stressed the need to boost solidarity among Muslims. He called on all ideological schools of thought to emphasize common denominators in Islam and distance themselves from differing viewpoints.

Thousands of Pakistani Muslims and Shiite and Sunni clerics and personalities participated in the interment ceremonies for Dr. Naqvi.

Killings Said Not To Affect Bhutto U.S. Visit

BK1003031795 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 10 Mar 95 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD—March—Setting aside apprehensions that the tragic Karachi incident may scuttle reinvigoration of Pak-US relations, the Foreign Office said here Thursday [9 March] that the act of terrorism will not have any adverse impact either on the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to US or to the American First Lady Hillary Clinton's visit to Pakistan.

At his weekly briefing the Foreign Office spokesman, Munir Akram, sounded positive that notwithstanding the tragic incident the present trend of warming up of relations between the two countries would continue uninterrupted. He said Washington has appreciated Pakistan's cooperation which it has extended to US and international community to eliminate terrorism, particularly with reference to this tragic incident. He said "It is clear that are certain quarters which have an interest in destabilising Pakistan, destabilising Karachi and harming friendly relations that exist between Pakistan and the US, especially at this crucial juncture when important exchanges are to take place between the two countries".

Referring to the trend of investigation into the slaying of the two American officials, the spokesman said he would not make any disclosure at this point for lack of concrete evidence.

"But there are very strong motivations and assumptions which we will be following during the course of the investigations". He said Pakistan has accepted the US offer to help Pakistan in tracking down the killers. "A team of FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) will soon be arriving in Pakistan".

The spokesman maintained that the presence of an FBI team in Pakistan to assist the local investigators would not be unusual". Such teams cooperate when a sensitive and larger conspiracy is involved. This is but normal that when nationals of two countries are involved in any assault investigation teams of these countries join hands to apprehend the culprits". He recalled that a similar course of investigation was adopted when President Ziaul Haq was killed along with US Ambassador in an air crash.

He said Mrs Hillary Clinton will reach Islamabad according to schedule for a two-day visit on March 27, The details of her engagements are still being finalised but these will be related to promoting relations between the two countries in various fields.

Taking serious exception to the "bizarre" statements made by Russian parliamentarian Vladimir Zhirinovskiy during his current visit to India, the spokesman said that the Government of Pakistan viewed his utterances with consternation. "Mr Zhirinovskiy's recommendations that India should absorb Pakistan and Bangladesh are offensive and unacceptable". The Russian parliamentarian's dream that the Russian and Indian "empires" will have common borders implies a design to commit aggression against a large number of sovereign states which presently exist between these two countries.

He said Pakistan regretted that India had provided Mr Zhirinovskiy a platform for the expression of such offensive statements. He pointed out that the "ludicrous views" of the Russian parliamentarian had been given respectability by his meetings with the Indian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bhattia, Leader of the Opposition Mr Vajpayee and Speaker of Lok Sabha Shivraj Patil.

The spokesman termed Mr Zhirinovskiy's remarks as constituting an infringement of Pakistan's independence and sovereignty. He called upon India to affirm its respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states enshrined in the UN Charter and disassociate itself from the aggressive and unacceptable views of Mr Zhirinovskiy.

'Long Shadow' Cast Over Visit

BK1003063095 Lahore THE NATION HEADLINE NEWS SERVICE in English 0205 GMT 10 Mar 95

["Karachi murders cast shadow over Benazir's U.S. visit" by Khalid Hasan; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington—The cold-blooded gangland style killing of two American diplomats on a Karachi street on Wednesday [8 March] has cast a long shadow over Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's official visit to the United States beginning 5 April. The murders also throw into jeopardy the visit to Pakistan later this month of the President's wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton who is to be accompanied by her 14-year-old daughter and their only child, Chelsea. The killings will reinforce the increasingly accepted view that Pakistan is not only a haven for hard-core Muslim extremist groups, but is also unable, if not somewhat unwilling, to reimpose order and bring the bloody sectarian strife that is now a part of Pakistani urban life to an end.

The Benazir Bhutto government is seen as well-intentioned but weak-kneed, irresolute and afraid of moving firmly against sectarian and religious violence for fear of a backlash. Appeasement and indifference are seen as the dominant features of government policy. The Karachi murders could not have come at a more inappropriate time, coincide as they do not only with the visit of the Prime Minister but with the ongoing trial in New York of Sheikh Abdel Rehman and his followers who are accused of plotting the World Trade Centre bombings and the bombing of other crucial points, including the United Nations and the Lincoln Tunnel which connects the island of Manhattan with New Jersey. The Pakistani connections of the Sheikh have been often highlighted here by the media. The recent arrest of Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf in Islamabad has also contributed to the impression that people of a certain ideological hue consider Pakistan a safe place to be in and even operate from. That he was speedily repatriated by the Bhutto government was noted but did not receive the high praise Islamabad apparently expected.

'Intense' Visit Preparations Under Way

BK1003091395 Lahore THE NATION HEADLINE NEWS SERVICE in English 0203 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD—Intense preparations for Prime Minister [PM] Benazir Bhutto's visit to the U.S. in April are under way with official circles almost going haywire to make this crucial tour a grand success. After two earlier teams, two more delegations are heading for the States, only to add more confusion to the already chaotic conditions.

The tour of PPP's [Pakistan People's Party] legal duo, Aitzaz Ahsan and Iqbal Haider had not been all that successful in lobbying for the PM's visit. According to reports rolling in from the States, they had redoubled the differences among local PPP factions which had been earlier aggravated by PM's Political Secretary, the all-powerful Ms Naheed Khan. A full brigade of Murtaza Bhutto fans is all set to disrupt her visit when she reaches there. A new team headed by Federal Information Minister Khalid Kharal is being sent for spadework in the States. The Minister is said to have the illustrious company of Senator Jahangir Badr, Syed Mumtaz Shah and Col (Retd) Ikramullah during the tour. It remains unclear what any of them has to do with lobbying in the States, though Ikramullah may have a reason to meet his son-in-law who is posted in Los Angeles.

Another 60-member delegation is shortly leaving on the pretext of organising cultural functions in the States. They have an agenda for arranging fashion shows, belle dancing evenings in Washington DC, New York and Los Angeles.

Bhutto's Attitude on Karachi Events Criticized

BK1003130195 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu
10 Mar 95 P 10

[Editorial:"The Killing of American Diplomats: Fresh Apprehensions and the Prime Minister's Indifference"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Terrorists riding a yellow cab fired on an American consulate van in Karachi on Wednesday [8 March], killing two diplomats and injuring one. The dead includes a lady secretary of the consulate. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and opposition leader Mohammad Nawaz Sharif expressed regrets over this act of terrorism. Expressing regrets over the killing of the U.S. diplomats, the Pakistan Government's official statement expressed its resolve to arrest the culprits at any cost. The U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, has also stated that the assailants will be apprehended by all means. President Clinton has directed the U.S. Administration to extend all possible assistance to Pakistan in tracing the culprits responsible for the murder in Karachi.

Amidst the incidents of bloodshed and terrorism in Karachi, this is the first assault against diplomats. It is true that after the murder of the two U.S. diplomats by terrorists, the situation in Karachi has assumed a new dimension. After this tragedy, the manifestations of the role of the police and the lousy performance of the government have given rise to several fresh apprehensions and threats. Describing the killing of the U.S. diplomats as a serious incident, opposition leader Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has overtly stated that the present authorities are neither serious about solving the problems in Karachi nor do they have the capability to do so. There is no doubt that the Benazir Bhutto government has not displayed a responsible attitude, sincerity, and the seriousness necessary to improve the grave situation prevailing in Karachi. Besides, the shortsightedness and lack of wisdom demonstrated toward the opposition's offer of cooperation and the negotiations with the Muhajir Qaumi Movement and other parties to find a political solution to the problems are unprecedented. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, Kazi Hussain Ahmad, Malik Mohammad Qasim, Maulana Samiul Haq, and several other political leaders have also attributed this incident to the government's total failure.

The government has announced several measures to trace the culprits responsible for the Karachi incident. In the words of Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, the prime minister has set up a high-level commission to probe the murder of the diplomats. In a letter to President Clinton, the prime minister has held out an assurance that every possible step will be taken to nab the culprits responsible. All these things hold good in their own perspective. However, the prime minister's directives and the formation of committees to deal with terrorism in Karachi have so far proved to be ineffective and futile. In the past, the prime minister and the president camped in Karachi for several days and during that period, gratifying announcements about controlling terrorism were also made. But what was the result? After these announcements, 214 people were killed during the holy month of Ramadan alone. Terrorists targeted mosques, shrines, and homes one by one and did not even spare those fasting and waiting in the mosques for prayers. But, the prime minister and her "poor" chief minister could not get even one culprit arrested.

It seems that as a result of the attitude of the prime minister and the Sindh government, the Karachi police is also not showing any interest in taking action against the culprits. A few minutes after the shooting on the American consulate van, a traffic policeman present stopped a local police van and said the culprits responsible for the terrorist act were fleeing in a yellow cab. But, the sub inspector sitting in the van said that he did not want to chase them and invite death. This incident has been brought to the notice of the Inspector General of Police for Sindh, Mr. Shigri, as well. Now, let us see what action he is going to take.

At this juncture, we would like to request the prime minister to take pity on the people of Karachi and the citizens of this country. Her statement in Singapore that the problem in Karachi cannot be solved overnight and that the law and order problem is confined to certain localities of the city only bear testimony to the fact that she treats the serious problem in Karachi also as a "routine" affair. This attitude does not speak well about a prime minister of any country. What should have been done is that first of all, the prime minister should not have gone out of the country under these circumstances and as she has already gone, she should have returned immediately after the tragic events in Karachi, Lahore, and Jhang. Nevertheless, from the "unofficial engagements" of the prime minister in Singapore, it appears that the distinguished prime minister did not have any concern for the country's situation and that she considers as sufficient the dispatch of a message to President Clinton, the setting up of a high-level committee or commission to investigate the murder, and the mere issuance of statements. This attitude also is against the prime minister's claims of her being "people-oriented". We deem it our duty to caution that if the prime minister does not act sincerely to resolve and control the situation and does not take effective and prudent steps to control terrorism and end political confrontation, the situation will go out of hand and pose a threat to the system itself.

Security 'Beefed Up' at Foreign Embassies

BK1003062195 Islamabad THE NATION in English 10 Mar 95 p 16

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad—The government has beefed up security for foreign embassies in the wake of attack on US diplomats in Karachi on Wednesday [8 March].

Local agencies on instructions from the Ministry of Interior has strengthened manpower already deployed for diplomats' security. The Karachi carnage has left local diplomats more scared about their lives with many embassies in the Capital particularly asking the local agencies to provide them more security. Many embassies have also issued special instructions for their staffers, particularly in sensitive areas of Karachi and Lahore, to be cautious during their activities in the cities. "It is becoming just like Beirut," a diplomat opined at a Bangladeshi reception Thursday. The gentleman had recently arrived from his posting in the perpetually war-torn Capital of Lebanon. He believed he was not feeling any change from the atmosphere there. Another diplomat who had arrived from Karachi Thursday shared his opinion. "It's even worse in Karachi," he remarked.

Almost every diplomat at the reception exhibited a similar feeling of in security. A spokesman of the Interior Ministry, when approached, said the government was cognizant of the situation. "We are doing our best to restore their confidences since it is bringing a bad name to the country abroad," he commented. He was quite right.

The killing of two Americans has brought the civil war-like situation in Karachi in international limelight. All global news networks, including CNN and BBC, continued to broadcast the details of the incident, linking the incident to international conspiracy, the most glaring being its connection with the Ramzi Yusuf incident, all day long. The spokesman agreed that the hundreds who got killed in Karachi in the last few months could not invoke so much global attention like the killing of two Americans did. If this was the aim of the killers, they had been quite successful in that Pakistan now seems to have become world famous for subversive activities.

When probed, he admitted that the government might avail the help of ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] who will work hand in glove with FBI to dig into the Karachi incident. There are also chances of the government employing FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] personnel in the investigation. The investigation of the killings is being done on a scale never undertaken by the government in recent times. It is obvious that the government wants to satisfy the Clinton administration before Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's proceeding to the States in April. This incident has affected the tour even before her landing in America.

'At Least' 10 Killed in Bombing of Karachi Mosque

BK1003111395 Hong Kong AFP in English 1054 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 10 (AFP)—At least 10 people were killed and several others were injured when a powerful bomb exploded in a mosque here on Friday [10 March], police said.

The bomb went off in a Shi'ite mosque located in the violence-plagued city's eastern Malir district, coinciding with a weekly service, they said.

Police said the device may have been set off by a timer.

The explosion climaxed a brutal week for Pakistan's commercial hub that included the killing of two US diplomats who worked at the local American consulate. Hundreds of people have died in the past year in a wave of violence that has pitched Shi'ites against Sunnis, and seen tit-for-tat killings by rival factions of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), the city's biggest political party.

The MQM which represents people who settled in Pakistan after the partition of the Indian sub-continent in (?1947). [sentence as received]

Four-Nation Transit Trade Agreement Signed

BK1003013795 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan, China, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan signed a transit trade agreement in Islamabad this afternoon opening the land routes for commercial links. The historic quadrilateral agreement restores Pakistan's all-land trade routes with Central Asia through China. It would provide the shortest route to Central Asia for their export and imports through Pakistani ports. The agreement which was signed by representatives of the four countries is valid for five years and is automatically renewable for a further period of five years. It is also open to other states who can join it with the concurrence of the four countries. It stipulates that the four countries will provide each other the facility of free transit across their territories for goods excluding smuggled items, weapons and ammunition, narcotics drugs, and also the goods forbidden for their respective laws.

Sri Lanka

LTTE To Accept Foreign Mediation If Talks Fail

BK0903152695 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has said that it is prepared to talk directly with the government and will accept foreign mediation if the talks fail. The statement released in London yesterday said that they wish to talk directly with the Sri Lankan Government and if the talks fail they would welcome mediation from foreign countries. The LTTE also said that it was looking forward to the next round of talks.

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